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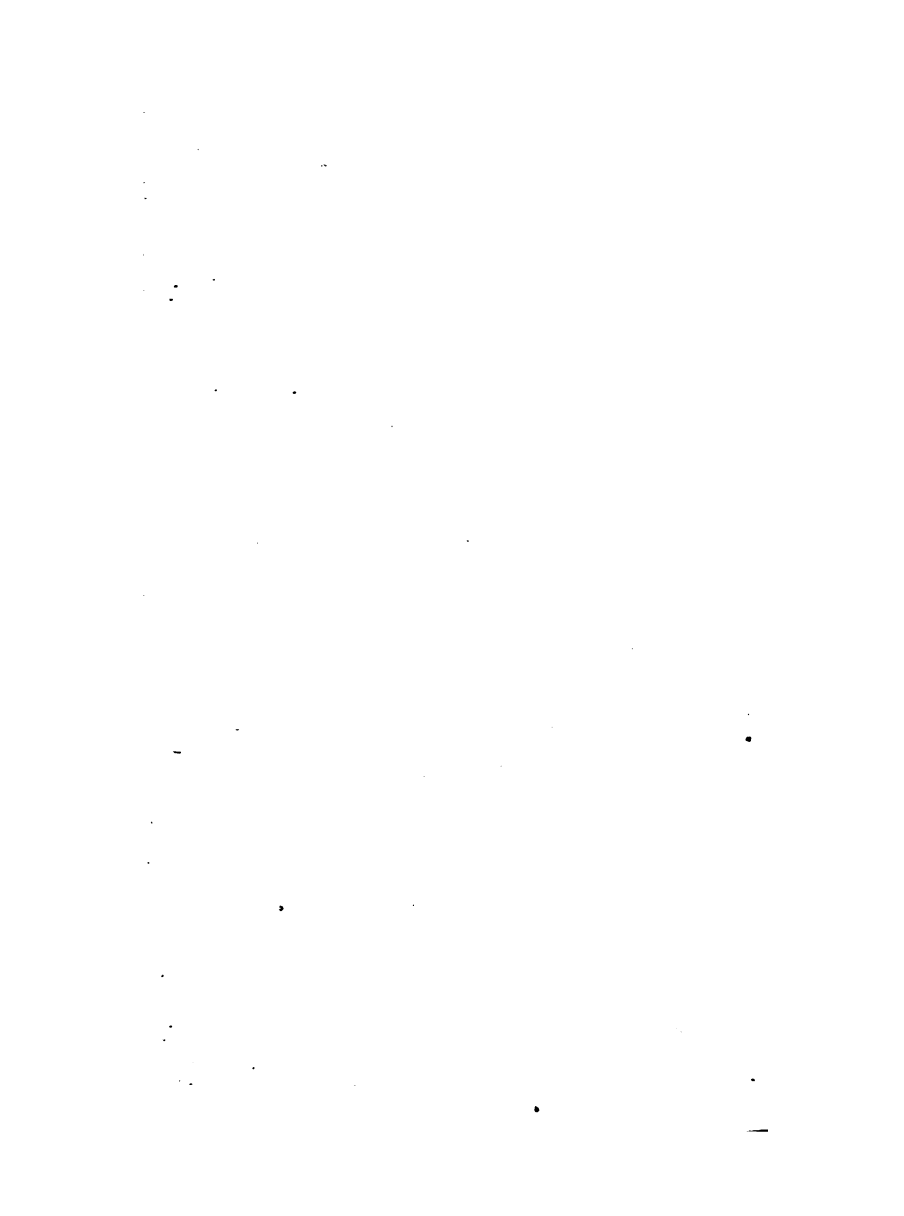
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THE
VILLAGE SCHOOL.

BY
MRS. PERRING.

SCHOOL AND THE STORY OF A HOUSEHOLD.



LONDON:
ROUTLEDGE, WARNES, AND ROUTLEDGE,
FARRINGTON STREET;
NEW YORK: 56, WALKER STREET.

1859.

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P R E F A C E.

MY DEAR YOUNG READERS,

SUCH of you as have read "The Story of a Mouse," will, perhaps, remember that I promised again to address you at no great distance of time; that promise I have fulfilled, and now invite you to accompany me through "The Village School."

I have prepared a feast for the occasion. I hope it will prove one to my little friends. I have been careful (with one or two exceptions) to introduce you only to *good* company; I would rather give you characters to admire and imitate, than such as should be shunned and disliked, although of these latter I have admitted a few, to show what effect kindness and a good example may produce.

Not many of my young readers will know anything, perhaps, of village-life; but whether in town or country, there is always the admixture of good and evil: a kind monitor in every little

the second, to trouble for yourself
sorrow and uneasiness for those who

FAREWELL



THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.



CHAPTER I.

IT was a sad day for poor Mrs. Ellis when she returned home with her two children, Alice and Edward, after having seen the coffin lowered into the earth which contained the body of her dear husband, who had been killed by a fall from the scaffolding on which he was at work. She had, however, one great comfort in her trouble. What do you think it was, gentle reader? Some of you, perhaps, will guess rightly, and some will not; much will depend on the early lessons you have received. Some may think that Mrs. Ellis had money, and a great many kind friends who could help her; but this was not the case, for the family had not resided many years in the village, and Mrs. Ellis was not a woman to make many acquaintances. Those who did know her, esteemed her highly; for she was not only a clever, industrious woman, who kept her house in order, and brought

"What of that?" said the bad boy; "he'll know nothing about it, unless you tell him."

"Oh! Tom," said the child, "do you think I would take what does not belong to me? that would be stealing, you know."

"No," said Tom, "it wouldn't, for *I* should give it to you; where's the harm in giving you a sup of milk?"

"Because it is not yours to give," said Alice; "and it would be breaking the commandment."

"Oh, yes," said Tom, with great contempt in his tone and manner; "I suppose that's what you learn at the Sunday school. Well, I can't abide to go there; to be shut up all the afternoon, learning lessons, and saying hymns, and reading the Bible, instead of running about in the fields enjoying oneself, fishing, or birdnesting, or getting nuts."

"Oh! Tom, how you do talk," said Alice; "it is quite shocking to hear you. Why, if you never read your Bible, nor go to church, nor to the Sunday school, do you think you will ever go to heaven?"

"Oh!" replied the graceless boy, "there's plenty of time to think of such things when we are old."

"Why, children die," said Alice, "and if they are wicked and never loved God, nor good places, and good people, how can they go to

upon going to church as a tiresome duty, which duty they thought there was no great harm in neglecting, whenever the least obstacle to their going presented itself; or, if they did think there was harm, they put the thought away from them as quickly as they could. This, you know, was checking the voice of conscience, which I fear my little readers sometimes do; but it is a sad mistake if they think on this account that their sins will not find them out, for in one way or other sin must always meet with punishment.

But let us return now to poor Mrs. Ellis. She is sitting on a low chair, bending over her fatherless children, who are both kneeling beside her, with their faces buried in her lap, and weeping bitterly. For a long time no one said anything, their grief was so great; at last Edward raised his head, and said, "Mother, do you think Mr. Ingram will come here this evening?"

"I have no doubt he will, my child; but why do you ask, dear?"

"Oh, because I heard old Nanny Jones say that he always brought comfort wherever he went, and I want him to comfort you, mother."

"I well know his kindness, darling," said the poor woman; "but what comfort can he give us, seeing that he cannot restore your dear father to life?"

"Oh, no! oh, no!" said the little boy; and again

feelings, was earnestly questioning the poor child about her late father; and, all unconsciously, laying open the wounds that were but very slightly closed. "And what does your mother mean to do, dear?" said she, to the already weeping Alice.

"I cannot tell, Mrs. Wheeler; I do not know yet what we shall do; but I pray to God to take care of us."

"Ay, ay, child! that's all very right and proper, of course. Mr. Ingram's a great man for talking about that, but I don't see myself that so much praying does any good. I don't think that those who pray so much are any better off than other folk."

Mrs. Wheeler evidently took Alice's remark to herself, and felt it a reproach, though, of course, the poor child was quite unconscious of any such thing. And Alice, though she was a clever and sensible, was by no means a pert child. She felt that it did not become her to contradict, or to dispute with, Mrs. Wheeler, a person so much older than herself; though she did not at all agree with what the farmer's wife had said, she prudently held her tongue; while Mrs. Wheeler, not wishing to talk longer on so disagreeable a subject, asked Alice if she had seen "our Tom," as she called her son. "He's been gone these two hours, nearly," said the dame; "he brought some of the cows into

how he found time to do so much as he did, for he had always plenty of day-work. But he rests now from all his labours, and for him, as you say, dear Fanny, we need not sorrow. But what *is* to be done now for those he has left behind? We all owe John Ellis a debt of gratitude, which must be paid to his widow and children."

"We do, indeed," said Mrs. Ingram; "and this question is a very serious one, and a very difficult one, for it is not easy to find employment in this small place, either for children or grown people, brought up as the Ellises have been, not that they would be ashamed of doing anything for an honest livelihood, but because they are not used to hard, rough country work; and besides that, the children are too young to engage in it."

Mr. Ingram sat for some time considering. He appeared to be quite in a deep study. At last he said, "I have found it, Fanny; I have found it!"

"Found what, Alfred," said Mrs. Ingram, who was quite startled at her husband's sudden exclamation, "what have you found?"

"What will give Mrs. Ellis employment, and, I hope, enable her to maintain her children respectably. You remember, my dear, my going, a short time ago, to call on Squire Langdale, at the Manor-house."

"Yes, very well, Alfred; but what has that to do with Mrs. Ellis?"

"Well, little woman, that is just what I am going to tell you, if you will hear me patiently."

Mrs. Ingram smiled as she said, "I will be very patient, Alfred dear, and very quiet, I assure you."

"You know, Fanny, my visits to the Manor-house are not mere visits of ceremony, for I am thankful to say that Mr. and Mrs. Langdale and their two dear lively daughters are always ready to assist me in any project I may have for improvement; but this time the suggestion came from the squire himself. We had been talking a long time about village matters, and the squire and his lady both said how glad they were to see the church and the Sunday school so well attended. 'But,' said Mr. Langdale, 'why don't you try to get up a day school, Mr. Ingram? It must be very much wanted, I am sure, and I think it would do a great deal of good.' You may be sure, Fanny, that I quite agreed with the squire; but I told him I thought it would be difficult to procure a teacher for the school, as we had no woman in the village who had both time and education for such an employment. I told him also that I believed a woman would be better than a man for such an office, because of the girls being taught needlework. The squire's lady and the two young ladies were *quite of my opinion*, and they all wished very

much to see a school established, the squire saying, 'Well, Mr. Ingram, if you will set about it, and you find that it can be done, you may look to me and the ladies here to be your chief supporters.'"

"How very kind that was of the squire," said Mrs. Ingram; "why, dear Alfred, did you not tell me of this before?"

"Because, my dear," said her husband, "I have had so many things on hand lately, and poor Ellis being taken away so suddenly, I had almost forgotten the conversation. This trial, however, I hope will work for good to many; I mean to go down to Rose Cottage this evening, and tell the poor widow I have something in prospect for her, though, of course, I shall not enter into any particulars to-night. Mrs. Ellis will be the very person we want for a village school."

"Oh, nothing could be better thought of for her, Alfred; she has been so well brought up herself, and from her method of teaching her own children, I believe she is exactly the person to instruct our village girls and boys, for she will teach them things fitted for their station in life."

"Well, then," said Mr. Ingram, "we had better go at once to Mrs. Ellis's. You wish to go with me, Fanny, do you not?"

"Yes, to be sure, Alfred; and I have some things to take to Mrs. Ellis, which I know will be useful to her."

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

er waiting a few seconds without answer. Ingram's question, he went up to that man, and told him the whole truth. "I am sorry, sir," said he.

Why for what, my boy? Sorry that you broken the eggs and thus disappointed your mother of the treasure you were so very anxious to get; or sorry that you have been disobedient, and have grieved and vexed your dear mother?"

"I don't know, sir," said the child.

"Well, Edward, you do know that to disobey your mother is wrong, don't you?"

"Yes, Mr. Ingram."

"Well, then, I hope you *will* try to be a better boy in the future. I don't ask you to make any promises, but I ask you not to forget what has happened this morning."

But our visitors are at the door ; they enter without knocking, for it is standing open ; and here, just as I before described them to you, dear reader, was the sorrowful group found by their kind friends. They had not changed their position, except that poor little Edward had cried himself to sleep, and had sunk down, though with one arm still on his mother's lap, and his head resting against her knee. Alice was sitting close beside Mrs. Ellis on the floor, now and then glancing at her mother with tearless eyes ; for she had wept the little fountain of her grief dry, except that a rapid gush would escape, at intervals, from some deep secret spring, which seemed to well up in a moment, almost unknown to herself. Poor Alice ! she was two years older than her brother Edward, and a gentle, timid, quiet girl she was, yet very fond of making herself useful, and quick at learning the lessons her good mother taught her. Alice had been her father's chief companion. She was not so volatile as Edward, for he, full of life and boyish spirits, was here, there, and everywhere, and sometimes no one knew where. Alice was always at hand, and when Mrs. Ellis was busy with her household duties, and Edward was at play, she was in the garden with her father, weeding the beds, or tying up the pinks, sweet peas, and other flowers that required attention. Then, when they were both tired of their work, Alice read a chapter

4

forms, and I hope in the next week please
ones to make use of them. And now
and beat up for scholars, so good-bye
and, Edward, remember your promise.'

Thus the good pastor took leave of
of the little dwelling, and in another
will accompany him in his various visits

"Dear little fellow," said his mother, laying her hand gently on his curly head; "I believe he could cry no longer."

"And sleep for a time is soothing all his sorrows," added the good pastor.

"Ah! sir; it is a mercy when it comes to our aid, though I have dreaded to go to sleep lately; it is so miserable to wake and feel such a load of sorrow pressing upon one's heart."

"I know it is, dear Mrs. Ellis, and I'm sure I need not tell you how deeply we all mourn your great loss, and sympathize with your affliction."

"Yes," said the poor woman, whose tears rained thick and fast, "I well know how much my dear husband was respected by all who knew him. This is a comfort to me; and I know, too, Mr. Ingram, that he loved and served his Saviour, and that death did not find him unprepared; and this is, indeed, my strongest consolation."

"And a holy and blessed one it is, Mrs. Ellis," said the minister. "Can we be too thankful, if, when standing by the grave of a departed friend or relation, and praying God to sanctify our trouble, we are able at the same to praise Him for those who have departed this life in His faith and love? Shall we now," he added, "address our prayers to Him who heareth the cry of the sorrowful?"

Without uttering a word, for her heart was

Ingram rose, and soon after they b
to the mourners ; but not before M
heard from her kind friends that s
ual would be done to enable her to
lf and her children. An earnest "C
sir, and your dear lady!" was all s
n reply, and the worthy couple to
, kissing poor Alice as they went
g her to try and comfort her
ghtfully and silently Mr. and Mrs.
ied their way home, contrasting, perl
hey had just left with their own chee
y home, in which two little cherubs we
weetly, dreaming, it may be, of heaven
t inhabitants ; for such we may beli
s dreams to be, if we may judge by tl
often dimple their round rosy chee

CHAPTER II.

As soon as the pastor and his good lady had left the widow's cottage, Alice began to bestir herself in household matters. She well knew that giving way to grief was not likely to restore comfort to her poor mother, and she therefore determined, if possible, to check her own sorrow, at least in appearance, and endeavour to make herself useful.

Now, I know some persons do not believe that a child so young as Alice (for she was not ten years old) would have the feeling and thoughtfulness here spoken of. But I differ from such persons; I believe, and, indeed, I know, that there are deep streams of affection flowing through young hearts, which only need the gentle hand of maternal love, or the no less powerful, though less pleasing, hand of affliction, to make them spring up into a clear sparkling fountain, which shall give refreshment to all around. Alice had felt both these; and her gentle heart was full to overflowing of love to that dear parent who was still left to her, and whom she determined to do all in her power to assist and comfort. She now moved gently towards the cupboard, and took out a basin of milk and some

bread for her brother's supper; then she went to him, and tenderly lifting the still sleeping boy into a chair, she tried to arouse him by telling him that his bread-and-milk was ready for him.

"Edward, dear, here is your supper; it is your bedtime, and poor mother is tired and not well; I want you to eat your bread-and-milk, and then to undress and go to bed."

"Oh! Alice, why did you wake me up?" said the little fellow; "I was just dreaming that I was saying my prayers to father, and that he kissed me, and said, like he used to do, 'God bless you my boy!'" And poor Edward burst out again into a passionate fit of crying and sobbing, and Alice felt as if her own heart would break at the sight of him and her weeping mother, whose grief seemed renewed by the exclamation of her son.

Keeping back her tears as well as she could, and stooping over her little brother, Alice said in a low voice, "Hush, darling Edward! perhaps father is looking down and blessing his dear children;—but see you have made poor mother cry again. Will you not try to be a man for her sake?"

The child turned, and looked at his mother; then, putting his arms round his sister's neck, he said, in a whisper, "I'll try to be good, Alice; I'll try not to cry."

"Come then, dear, and eat your bread-and-milk;

and when you've gone to bed, I'll make mother some tea, and that will do her good, I hope."

"Shall I say my prayers to you, dear; then I need not disturb mother?"

"Yes, do, darling," said his sister; "we will both kneel down together."

So they knelt down by the little bed, and though their voices were very low, they were heard by Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come to me."

Soon poor Edward was in bed, and soon fast asleep again; and Alice, with her mother's arm thrown round her, was reading some of those gracious promises that are written, for our comfort, in the holy Word of God; promises which the poor widow knew well where to turn to, in her affliction. Then the night closed in, and Alice and her mother went to bed, I fear not to sleep, but it might be so.

A bright, lovely morning succeeded this melancholy night, and Alice rose early, for she had many new duties to perform. Idleness, as well as being the nurse of crime and the breeder of discontent, is the ready promoter of sorrow; and Alice, though she did not wish to forget her grief, much less her dear father, thought wisely that she should best show her love to her remaining parent, by doing what she could to bring some comfort back to their cottage home. She therefore, as I said,

I believe, are a friend of Mrs. Ellis's, heard that John was very kind to your father in his last illness."

"Oh, you may say that, sir," said the lady, her tears standing in her eyes. "I shall never forget Mrs. Ellis's kindness to me and the charity she showed my poor husband was lying ill the winter of last. And John Ellis! oh, that dear boy is gone to his rest now;" and Mrs. Ellis so bravely overcome, sat down and wept bitterly. Mr. Ingram was much affected, and did not interrupt this genuine burst of feeling until it had parted. When it had subsided, he continued: "No one living but myself has known the kindness that was in the heart of that good man. Day after day, perhaps I have seen him, night after night, he came."

your dear lady's, sir, my husband, thank God, wanted for nothing; and, oh, I am thankful both to you and them! Poor John Ellis had plenty of work, and good work, too, at that time; and the family were very well off, and what they had they were always willing to share with others."

"I know," replied Mr. Ingram, "that John Ellis was an excellent workman, as well as a true Christian, and I, too, have lost a friend in him, Mrs. Richards."

"And is Mrs. Ellis going to keep a school, sir? I fear she will not get many scholars, but my two girls shall go, in whatever way I try to save the money."

Here a nice-looking, neatly-dressed girl, the eldest of the family, who had been engaged folding clothes during this conversation, came up to her mother, and reminded her that the ladies of the Manor had asked her if she knew any girls in the village who could work in crochet. At that time she did not, but Jane Richards had since seen Alice with a piece in her hand, during her play hours, and the little girl told Jane that her mother had taught her. Perhaps Mrs. Ellis would teach Ann and Katy, and then in a little time they would be able to earn enough money to pay for their schooling.

"Well," said Mrs. Richards, "that may be a good reason for their learning, Jane; but I never

had any wish for them to be taught such-like work, because they might want to do it for themselves, and so become fond of little bits of finery, and that," said the poor woman emphatically, "I can't abide."

"You're quite right about that, Mrs. Richards, I think," said Mr. Ingram. "The love of dress must be injurious to young people; cleanliness and neatness everybody will approve of; but out-of-place finery must make even the wearer of it feel uncomfortable, and it has a most ridiculous appearance at all times, to say nothing of the hours that are too often wasted over it."

"Well, thank Heaven! as yet my children have no desire that way; and I only hope and pray that they never will have," answered the worthy dame.

"Then I may put Ann and Katy down on my list, may I?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Ingram; but when is the school to begin?"

"Next Monday morning, at nine o'clock, I hope. And now I must go in search of more scholars, for I have as yet only got the names of four, and I ought not to have less than twenty before I go home. So good day to you all."

"Good day, sir. I hope you will be successful in your visits; I'm sure it will be a capital thing for the village, as well as for poor Mrs. Ellis; and *it will be a kind of relief to her mind, too, sir; for*

she won't have so much time to think of her troubles."


And now, dear reader, we will if you please, begin a new chapter, and take a further walk with the clergyman, for he has not yet done his day's work.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

CHAPTER VII.

WELL, I declare, if Mr. Ingram isn't going into that wretched, dirty-looking place; I can hardly call it a cottage, it is a hovel, I think. I almost wonder how he can venture in; but he *is* gone in, though, and has seated himself upon a low stool, in spite of the misery he sees around him. And I ought not to wonder at this, for where wretchedness and vice are, there the minister of the Gospel (which you know means "*glad tidings*") is most needed, and he must follow his Master's footsteps, who came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Now, let *us* follow Mr. Ingram into Dame Smith's cottage. Oh, what a filthy place! The floor is of mud, and one mass of dirt; and this we shall not be in the least surprised at when we find that half a dozen miserable-looking fowls are suffered to roost here all night, and the two poor children have their bed (only a little straw and some old rags) in one corner of the room. What a state to live in! "We pity them," says the kind-hearted little reader. And so do I, and yet I know that *the fault of all this is in themselves*. Peep into



that next room, and you will see a wretched-looking man lying on a bedstead, for there is no bed on it, and it is kept together only by some thick rope, which goes across and across it, instead of sacking.

Not seven o'clock in the evening, and the man is quite tipsy! Can we wonder at the wretchedness? Almost all the money that he earns goes to the village alehouse, and the little that finds its way into his wife's pocket, does not enable her to buy food for the household, even if she were a good manager, which, I am sorry to say, she is not.

The poor children, how do they subsist? For they have never been taught to work, nor, indeed, anything. They run about in their rags from morning till night. If there is a crust for them in the cupboard when they get up, they take it for their breakfast, and go with a little tin to beg some blown milk of the neighbours, and bread, too, when the cupboard fails.

After what I have told you, reader, you will not, I am sure, think that these children have a good, kind mother to make up for their father's faults. No, indeed, they have not. Dame Smith is neither good nor kind. She has not been long in our little village, but quite long enough to make herself a general nuisance to all the neighbours; for she is, what I am happy to say none of the rest are, an idle, slovenly, dirty, gossiping body, running first

into one cottage, then into another, telling of her husband's faults, instead of trying to mend her own. No wonder the children are neglected! But the people of our village are a kind-hearted set, and they pity the poor barefooted bairns, as they call them, and are always ready to give them a drop of milk and a bite of bread.

Well, it is a shocking thing to be a pest to the neighbourhood. But what has good Mr. Ingram to say to dirty Dame Smith? There he still sits on the low stool, for they haven't a chair in the place; he looks kind yet sorrowful.

"I wish I could see you more comfortable, Mrs. Smith."


He does not begin to talk of religion to her just then; he knows it would be of no use.

"Well, indeed, Mr. Ingram, I wish so too, but where's the use of wishing?"

"That's just what I would say to you, dame. Where's the use of wishing, if we do not try ourselves to mend matters?"

"But what am I to do?" said the woman, rather rudely. "There's our Bob drunk again, as usual; and he's brought ne'er a penny home, and we haven't anything to eat in the house. I'm sure its enough to take heart out o' anybody."

"It is very sad, I own," said Mr. Ingram; "*but have you nothing* to blame yourself for?"



Your husband did not always drink, I think you once told me."

"No, indeed, he didn't. Some years ago he was a sober man, and a hard-working man, too."

"And he had a kind and tidy wife, who always kept herself and her house, and her children neat and clean; is not that true, dame?"

Mrs. Smith, though generally she had no lack of words, was silent now. She knew well enough that if the question were answered truly she must condemn herself, so she said nothing, and Mr. Ingram proceeded.

"Well, dame, I don't want you to confess to me. All I want is, that you should think over the time past, and where you find you have done wrong try to do better for the days to come. You know 'it is never too late to mend,' and God helps those who help themselves."

These few words, kindly said, appeared to have produced a good effect on the poor woman, for she said, in a very much altered tone,—

"But what can I do, Mr. Ingram? I know I have not been a good wife, and I know the poor children have not been taught as they should have been. But, then, when I was married I knew nothing myself, for I'd always to work in the factory, early and late, from the time I was a little child."

"Ah, that is the evil, that is the great social

orking in one, and yet your house and
children are neglected, and you look the
wretchedness yourself. How is this ?”

“ Well, I have no heart to work,” said
she with sorrowfully.

“ Not for your children’s sake ? Do you
wish them to grow up as dirty and as mis-
erable as yourself ?”

“ Indeed I don’t, Mr. Ingram ; but how
can I help ? I *can’t* teach them, and the
father *won’t* teach them, he’s always at the ale-
house.”

“ But, Mrs. Smith, you *can* wash your
children and comb their hair, and set them to
work, if it were only to pull up the weeds in
the garden.”

“ Yes, I might do that to be sure ; and
Mr. Ingram if you would come oftener,

And if you will really try to keep your children clean, I intend to put them both to the day school which we are going to set up in the village."

"I am greatly obliged to you for your kindness, Mr. Ingram; and the next time you come you shall see a change in the house."

"Well, before I go, you must promise me one thing; that you will turn out those fowls at night, and let them roost elsewhere; and if you will send your little girl down to the parsonage, I will let you have a whitewash-brush and some lime to do the walls of your house with, and that will sweeten the whole place. Now, mind what I said to you with regard to keeping the children clean, for you know others would not like to mix with them as they are at present."

"I'll mind, Mr. Ingram,—I'll mind," said the dame, "you may be sure."

"Well, good-bye," said the worthy clergyman; "with God's blessing on your endeavours, I have no doubt there will be better days to come for you, Mrs. Smith. Come, children," said this kind friend to two dirty urchins who were playing on the floor, "come, get up, and go with me into the garden. I must have all the weeds pulled up, and then you may take a jug and run to the parsonage for some milk for your supper. And, Mrs. Smith, if you will call at our house in the morning, you shall have the brush and the lime. Perhaps your

use clean before you come again, depend
And now, kind reader, we will bid adieu to our
mates of the cottage, and to Mr. Ingles
for a time. He has not nearly finished
or can it be done this evening, I'm sure
all call at farmer Wheeler's, and so we will
ease, precede him; but we must do so in the
next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE whole day after the doctor had set the dislocated shoulder, Tom lay groaning in bed. He was by no means a coward, but his sufferings were very great. Tom groaned, and William sat by his bedside as troubled in mind as his poor brother was in body, though he tried all he could to comfort the sufferer by endeavouring to divert his thoughts from the pain. He told him what he was going to do, or had done in the way of improvement about the farm, and how many nice little books Mr. Ingram had bought, or had sent to him to give as prizes to the Sunday scholars. "And I will ask him to lend me one or two to read to you, Tom, if you are obliged to remain in bed long."

"Oh, I'll soon be better, I hope," said Tom; "I shouldn't like to be here long; it's wearisome lying abed, and nothing to do."

"Well, but you must be thankful that it's no worse than it is; it's a great mercy you were not killed like poor John Ellis."

"I wonder why Ellis got killed," said Tom; "for you know, Bill, he's a wife and two children?"

"Ay, I know," said William; "and I know,

too, that he was a good man, and I believe he's gone to Heaven, and so it is better for him, you know."

"But it's not better for his wife and children," said Tom.

"That's more than we know," replied his brother. "The Bible says, 'Leave thy fatherless children, and let thy widows trust in me.' That was Mr. Ingram's text last Sunday, Tom; and don't you remember the fine sermon he made on it?"

"No, I don't remember, for I didn't hear it," said Tom. "I was looking out at the window seeing the cows scampering about, they were so teased with the flies."

"How little you thought then that one of them would so soon knock you down, ay, and might have been the death of you."

Tom groaned, but said nothing, though I know he thought something, for his conscience told him that he deserved what he had got. He was not really a hardened boy, though he had been far on the way to become one when he met with this severe check, which we trust will prove a blessing to him.

"Just turn me a little round in the bed, Bill, and I'll say my prayers, for I know I have been a bad boy, and I *am* thankful I was not killed."

At this moment the door of the room opened, and, preceded by Dame Wheeler, in walked our friend Mr. Ingram. "Ay, it's a bad job this for

our poor Tom ; I'm fearful it'll be a long time afore he gets well. But I tell him he must just have patience."

" And that's the advice I give too, Mrs. Wheeler. Quietness and rest are the only medicines he needs just now."

" And I believe that's the greatest punishment he could have," said his mother. " He can't abide being quiet."

" Well, I don't want to run about now," said Tom ; " I'll assure you, mother."

" Nay, nay, may-be not to-night, but I'll warrant afore two or three days are over, you'll be wanting to be off."

" Oh, I shall be well by that time," replied Tom.

" Don't make too sure of that," said Mr. Ingram. " If you are well in a month, you may think yourself very well of."

Here Tom again groaned.

" Hast much pain now, poor lad?" asked his kind mother, drawing nearer to the bed on hearing this expression of suffering.

" Yes, mother, it's bad to bide sometimes, I can tell you."

" Won't you sit down, sir?" said William, drawing a chair near to the bedside.

" Yes," said Mr. Ingram ; " I should like to have a little talk with my young friend here, if you will leave us together awhile."

Mr. Ingram thought wisely that Tom would be more willing to speak out plainly when there was only one listener.

Mrs. Wheeler and William left the room, and then the kind pastor took Tom by the hand, and said, "Well, my boy, is this the first time in your life that you ever had a misfortune?"

"No, sir," said Tom; "I fell off a stack about a year ago, and sprained my ankle badly, and was laid up for a week, but it warn't such a bad job as this."

"Then, what were you doing on the hayrick?"

Tom said nothing; he didn't much like this sort of questioning; for as he did not mean to tell Mr. Ingram a story, he knew it must lead to an exposure of his fault.

"Were you working for your father, my boy?" said the clergyman, kindly.

"No, I was trying to get birds out at holes in t' stack, and I slipped and fell down."

"And, perhaps, if you had let the little creatures remain in their warm beds, you would have been spared all the pain you then had to suffer."

No reply from Tom; so the clergyman went on—"And how did *this* accident happen; are you to blame at all?"

Tom looked aside at Mr. Ingram. He wondered whether his mother or Alice had told that gentleman *anything*. He knew his good brother had

not, for besides the confidence he felt in William's kindness of heart, he knew that he had been in close attendance at his bedside ever since the accident happened. There was another thing Tom knew, and that was, that Mr. Ingram was sure to find it all out some time, and he thought it would be better to tell him all about it at once; so he began his tale rather reluctantly, and in a very subdued voice.

"Don't be afraid, Tom," said Mr. Ingram, "to tell the honest truth. You have already been severely punished for your fault, if you have committed one, and I shall not reproach you for it."

Thus encouraged, Tom spoke out, and I am happy to tell you that he did not conceal any part of the transaction, even about his trying to persuade Alice to take what did not belong to her.

He received, you may be sure, no angry reproofs from his visitor. A little kind advice, a few words of expostulation, a solemn and affectionate warning, and then the pastor took his leave.

And we will bid Tom good night, also, and even say farewell to our village for twelve whole months.

CHAPTER IX.

AND now, after such a long absence, let me invite my kind little readers to go with me on a visit to Rose Cottage once more. Twelve months have actually passed away since our village school had been established there.

It is a lovely morning in September. The corn is either stacked, or standing in ripe full shocks all over the fields; for the harvest has not been a very early one. The trees all round the little village of B—— are bending with ripe fruit, ruddy or golden, as if the bright warm sun had forced them to exchange the livery of spring for the richer one of autumn. The very leaves have changed their colour, and instead of a profusion of shaded green, are glowing in all the variety of crimson, and yellow, and brown, and purple. Oh, more tints than I can tell you of; which sometimes so deceive the eye, that you fancy the graceful flowers of the laburnum are hanging in full bunches from their slender boughs. The birds seemed to know too that it was holiday time, for they kept up one incessant song, or chirp, or twitter, or caw, or *noise of some kind*; which, mingled together, was

very delightful. I only wish you had been there, dear reader, because I'm afraid you can't imagine, from my description, how very, very pleasant it all was.

"Edward and Alice, what are you doing in the garden so early this morning? And why, pray, is the cottage chimney smoking away as if it was in a terrible hurry to do some wonderful work?"

We will hear what the children have to say about it.

"Come, Edward, come, make haste, dear; don't stand looking at the bees now, there's a good boy. You know we must go for the little ladder to Farmer Wheeler's, or we can never get those fine bunches of grapes that grow on the top of the house."

"No, that we sha'n't, Alice; but mind, I am to climb up the ladder. Girls, you know, can't climb ladders; at least they shouldn't climb."

"Well, Teddy dear," said Alice, laughing, "I don't want to climb, so you may get all the fine bunches from the top of the cottage if you like; only, mind you don't fall and hurt yourself, as Tom Wheeler did from the hay-stack once."

"Oh, I'll take care of that," said Edward, putting on a very bold look; "I'm old enough now to mind what I'm about."

"Well," replied Alice, "I shouldn't like *you* to fall, Edward, although I think that Tom's fall into the ditch last year was the best thing that ever

naughty words."

"Well, well, Alice," said Ned, "I now you were in a terrible hurry to you are wasting all the time talking Wheeler; come, let's be off."

"Well, wait only one minute, till ask mother if she wants anything be

Now, you must be informed, kind good Mrs. Ellis was up and was quite business as the children intended to five in the afternoon she had to be baking of cakes as had never been in our village. And what for? asked curious body. Oh, you must really wait I can't stop to tell you just now, I have

And you, Edward, you impatient

jug for? We sha'n't be able to carry anything but the ladder, I can tell you."

"But we are to bring some eggs, and some cream for the cakes, Edward; Mrs. Wheeler told mother to send early this morning for them."

"With the ladder?" said Edward in despair. "I know very well we shall spill the cream and break all the eggs."

"Well, we sha'n't do it from disobedience, Edward," replied his sister.

Ah, sly girl! and for *once* we think a little ill-natured, although, perhaps, she did not mean to be so. I wonder whether, when she said that, Master Edward remembered his fall twelve months back, and the broken eggs? If he did, he took care not to say anything, but forgetting the small affront, he marched boldly on before Alice, without being gallant enough to offer to carry either the jug or the basket.

"I dare say," said Alice, coming up with her brother, "that Tom or William will be at home, and then they might help us back with the ladder."

"Ah, that's just what I don't want, Alice; for I know well enough that if they carry the ladder home, they'll want to gather the grapes."

"Oh, Edward, don't be so selfish," said his sister. "You know how hurt mother would be, if she heard you talk in this way."

"No, I don't want to be selfish," said the

little boy, "but I *do* want to climb up the ladder, and to gather those beautiful grapes."

"Well, dear, so you shall; I'm sure neither William nor Tom would wish to take that pleasure from you."

"I see them; I see them both at the gate there," and Edward sprung forward to meet the two young lads, quite forgetting his fears respecting them.

"We're come to ask if you will lend us your small ladder," said the little boy.

"And," added Alice, "we're come, too, for the cream and eggs that your mother promised for the cakes, William. Mrs. Langdale has sent such a quantity of flour, and currants, and butter, as you never saw; and she says we shall all have to be at the school-room by twelve o'clock, to receive our prizes, and to take possession of our new desks and forms. Then, after that, we are to play on the green in front of the school, with balls, and nine-pins, and I don't know what besides. Oh, yes, though, there are, I know, battledores and shuttlecocks! Oh, won't it be pleasant, Tom?"

"But what do you want the ladder for, Edward?" said the sedate William, "for it's up at the school-room."

"What school-room do you mean?" asks my little reader. "I thought the school was at Rose Cottage."

It was there, it has been there all this time, but

the school-room I am now speaking about is a beautiful new one that good Squire Langdale has built, and which was finished last week, to the great joy of the whole village, not excepting the inmates of the Manor House themselves. The ladder required was unfortunately, then, at this school-room, where it had been doing good service by enabling William and Tom, and Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, to decorate the walls with festoons and garlands of evergreens, as well as the windows and an arm-chair that was destined to receive either Mr. Ingram or the Squire, I cannot tell you which, until they have themselves decided the knotty point.

"Can't we go and fetch the ladder?" asked Alice, while poor Edward looked sadly crest-fallen, fearing that he should be disappointed in his hopes of a climb.

"I'll tell you what," said Tom, "I and Bill will go for the ladder, and you can just go into the house to mother for the cream and eggs, and we'll take the ladder to your cottage."

This, indeed, was a very good arrangement; and although Edward still felt anxious, he suffered himself to be persuaded to go with his sister, rather than with the two boys, who did not wish any one to see their handiwork until the whole party should be assembled to witness its striking effect. As that is the case, therefore, you and I won't follow them, but be content to walk in with Alice and

to the dairy, with her milk pail
checked up as usual, and her clean checke
1, " Good morning to you, Mrs. Wheeler
" Well, you *are* up early this mornin,
amever; I'm glad to see your rosy faces,
othing like rising betimes, depend on't.
ime by the forelock,' I've heard folks say
very good say 'tis, too. How's your mother,
inquired the good dame, " busy enough,
rant, this fine morning." Then, withou
Alice time to answer, she ran on, " *Your*
none of the lazy kind, I know. She's a
work, always doing something, and what's
she's brought you up to work, too, my !
I know many hard-working mothers, no
who'll slave and slave their life out, and
girls in idleness, or working bits of trash
what I call

pleasant to learn our lessons in the garden while it is cool, and to weed the beds before the sun is hot."

"Ay, it is, no doubt," said the dame. "And now, I suppose, you are come for the cream and eggs? Well, they are all put up for you; just step into the dairy."

Oh, what a nice place it is! Just step in, kind reader—I echo Mrs. Wheeler's words,—and take a peep at this cool, clean dairy.

Edward, whose tongue has been tied, in awe of the many words used by Dame Wheeler, now utters an exclamation of surprise and pleasure at the sight of the thick cream on the bowls, and the beautiful butter piled up on a large dish, at one end of the stone bench. "Oh, what nice butter, Mrs. Wheeler!" exclaimed he.

"Ay, indeed, and so it is," said the dame; "I believe there's no better butter anywhere about. I have no need to go to market with it, for it is all custom'd, you see, and it's sweet as a nut. Isn't it?" said she, appealing to Alice, whose mother always got her small quantity of butter from the farm.

"Indeed it is," replied Alice, "and that's no wonder, for your dairy is so beautifully clean, and the cream looks so thick."

"Well, I suppose so, indeed," said the good dame. "It would be a strange thing to see a dirty dairy."

"But how bright and red the bricks are; they look as if they had been washed this morning, though it is so early."

"I should just think they had," said Mrs. Wheeler. "Why, child, they are washed every morning, to be sure, and all the bowls scalded out with hot water, else we shouldn't get such nice thick cream; for, you see, it wouldn't keep time enough. But I reckon your mother will want the eggs and cream, so you mustn't stay any longer, children, or the cakes 'll be spoiled, and that would be a bad job, ye know, wouldn't it, Edward? Bless your bonny face!" said the good dame: "but you are like your poor father!"

This kind but unfortunate allusion brought the tears into the eyes of poor Alice, as she remembered the loss they had sustained just twelve months ago.

Mrs. Wheeler was a very quick observer; she saw at once that she had opened a wound and let loose the flood of sorrow; but she was too wise to attempt to close it by any further remarks. She only said cheerily to Edward, "Now, my little lad, thee must away; and see, here's a basket of fine apples, as red as your own rosy cheeks. William got them for you this morning; they'll help t'make up the feast, you know; and mind you be in time for th' school; it wouldn't do for mistress's *children to be late, I reckon.*"

Alice, thanking Mrs. Wheeler for her kindness, and smiling through her tears, set off with Edward towards the cottage, but they had not gone far when they heard a loud shouting behind them.

"Stop, stop," from William and Tom, who were coming along, post haste, with the ladder. And this puts me in mind, little reader, that *I* should stop, and, leaving the children for a short time, take you with me to the new school-room, whence the two boys had just come out. So, while the little party are making the best of their way home to the cottage, laughing under their burdens, and now and then stopping to rest, and all talking of their hopes in the afternoon's entertainment, we will go back to the school, the object of so much pleasurable excitement, and see what sort of a place it is, and what taste has been displayed in its decoration. The school is not a very large one, as our little village does not require that it should be ; but there is plenty of room to breathe in ; and see, it has those pretty diamond-shaped panes of glass, such as are in Rose Cottage, only the window-frames are much more substantial. Is it not a nice, clean, airy-looking place ? The children ought to be good, who come to learn there, for everything has been done that could be done to make them comfortable. There are nice broad forms for them to sit upon, and good desks for them to write and learn their lessons at. One side of the school is for the girls,

pincushion, and needle-book. Who can so kind as to make and fill all these bags gentle reader, I must tell you the truth. Mrs. Ingram was the person to suggest being made, and to lend a hand in making but I suspect that the two pleasant melodies at the Manor House, whom I know to hear more about, and to whom I shall introduce you, have been the principal makers.

Well, what do you think of the decorations? Are they not very beautiful? The walls are garlanded all round, and there are garlands on each festoon, and fine large nosegays in the window, with all the bright, gay autumnal flowers in them. Now, just step outside, if you please, and look at the sight within.

left so abruptly are actually gathering the grapes. Look, there is Master Edward at the very top of the ladder: suppose he should fall! Ah, there are others who have thought of that as well as we. Alice and William, thoughtful William, and loving sister, they are both keeping watch, and standing ready to receive the little adventurer if he *should* fall, which would not be a very unlikely thing, in his excitement. And Tom, what is he about? Oh, he's just holding the basket for Edward to put the grapes into. I must confess he is rather impatient in his office, and if it were not that he had a pair of scissors, and could occupy some of his time in cutting the bunches from the lower part of the tree, I don't think he could stand it long.

"Oh, here's a fine bunch!" exclaimed Edward; "such a fine one, just hidden away among the leaves, as if it didn't want me to find it; but, come out, old fellow; I know who shall have *you*."

And the large beautiful cluster was seen dangling in the little fellow's hand.

"No, I won't put it into your basket, Tom," said Edward.

"Why?" replied Tom, rather offended; "I'm not going to eat it."

"No, no; I'm not afraid of that. I know you wouldn't eat it, Tom; but I don't want it to be mixed up with the others. Here, Alice," said he, "you catch it in your pinafore."

curly pate (and this time it was really a
"I know," he repeated.

And who *was* this fine bunch intended for? Mr. Langdale, who had built such a nice nest for his No, kind reader; for Edward's mother, who loved dearly, and who dearly loved her little-headed boy? No, it was not her either; nor for his mother's kind friend in her hour of need; nor her comforter, her adviser; the friend by whose aid this great good had been brought about for Mr. Ingram that the finest bunch was saved by this little boy; and I think I may say with me, that underneath the curls there was this instance as much wisdom as if they had longed to a wig; and beneath the little curls a warm and grateful heart.

Edward had it all his own way this time

have fallen had not Tom caught him by the legs, and held him fast.

"Oh, Edward, what a fright you have given me!" exclaimed Alice; and Mrs. Ellis hearing her daughter's exclamation, ran out to see what was the matter. "Oh, don't be frightened, dear mother," said she; "there is no harm done; Edward slipt his foot off the ladder, and I was afraid he would fall."

"Oh, do come down, my boy," said his mother. "I shall be uneasy all the time you are up there."

"Why, mother," answered Edward, "it is the first time I have slipt all the while I have been up here; but if you are so frightened about me, I will come down."

Oh, how delighted the poor mother's heart was to hear her darling say this—to feel that he was so changed for the better. I told you, dear reader, that he had been a very wilful boy; gradually, however, he had been becoming more docile, and Mrs. Ellis thought, and thought truly, that Mr. Ingram's kind lessons to her dear little son had produced this change in him; and Edward showed his love for his good teacher by saving the best gift he could get for him.

And thus I have often seen, a kind and judicious friend would have more influence over children than the most foolishly indulgent parents; and that children will also love such friends.

CHAPTER X.

BUT Edward has come down from and Tom has taken his place. The grass is now nearly over, and Mrs. Ellis is all in to breakfast. Alice had set it out and the hot cakes which had been baked looked very tempting, though they were not the feast cakes, for they were without sugar. Mrs. Ellis said that it was only fair that the workers should have a good breakfast. She contrived to get a few cakes baked for the party.

"Well, William," said Mrs. Ellis, "we were all seated at the table; "so we are to labour together for the future stand?"

afraid because I am so young, and I think, perhaps, some of the boys won't mind what I say; but I am glad that you will always be there to speak to them if they are unruly."

"Yes, William; but besides that, Mr. Ingram and his good lady will often step in to see how we go on; and, altogether, I think we can manage very well; for, I must say there is a great change for the better in all the children who have come to school. I always find that a kind word goes a great way, and that it is best if possible to rule by love; the very worst children in the village are not insensible to it; for I had one day to go into Dame Smith's cottage, in order to reconcile mother and daughter. The girl, I know, is very stubborn; but though she will do nothing for her mother, she will do anything for me; and I saw plainly by Mrs. Smith's manner to the poor child, and from her harsh and bitter words, that she was going the very way to harden her heart. I had been talking kindly with Hannah, and the poor girl seemed much softened, for even when her mother was saying very hard and severe things of her, she suddenly darted across the kitchen, and exclaimed as she threw her arms about her,—'Oh, mother! don't, don't say such things; I do love you, indeed I do;' and Hannah wept bitterly, though Dame Smith did not seem in the least affected, but said it was all hypocrisy."

"Oh, what a cruel woman she must be!" exclaimed Edward, whose bright blue eyes were lighted up with anger at the cross mother, while Alice's were filled with tears for the poor unfortunate child who had such unkind parents.

"But," said Mrs. Ellis, "I must not have you to think that it is so now; for I am very thankful to say there is an improvement both in Hannah Smith and her mother. Good Mr. and Mrs. Ingram's visits, and the kindness they have shown to Dame Smith, seem to have made a great change in their miserable cottage; for though the father still drinks the most of what he earns, and the poor children cannot get shoes to their feet, they are both much cleaner than they used to be, and the cottage does not look like the same. The garden, too, is weeded; and I saw one day that they had got a little place made for the fowls, instead of keeping them all night in the house, as they did at one time. I wonder what kind friend made that nice little shed in the garden! William, do you know?"

"I know," replied Tom.

"And so do I," said Alice; "for Hannah told me that William Wheeler made it for them."

"I thought so," said the widow; "and I thank God, my dear boy, that he has put into your *heart to help* the wretched—those whom decent

people often shun rather than try to do them good."

"It would be, indeed, a shame," said William, "if I did not try to show how grateful I am for all the benefits I have received from Mr. Ingram. After the hours he has spent over my lessons, the books he has given me, and, more than all, the good example he sets to every one in the village, it would, indeed, be a shame and a sin, if I did not try to prove to him that I was not insensible to his kindness; but," he added, "I think, Mrs. Ellis, that what you have taught Hannah since she has been at school, has had the effect of softening her heart; and I think, too, that she has carried your lessons home, though Dame Smith is still a hard woman, and poor Hannah I dare say has often hard work to keep down her own temper, when her mother scolds and abuses her for the slightest fault."

Alice, whose soft eyes were again filled with tears on account of the poor ill-used girl, got up, and putting her arms affectionately round her mother's neck, kissed her cheek and said—"God bless *you*, my dear kind mother; I thank Him every day for His mercy; and oh, I do hope that we shall always be dutiful and loving children to you."

"I hope you will, my Alice," said the widow; "but now," added she cheerfully, "let us have

prayers. I must get on with my work. I have a great many cakes to bake by the afternoon; it is well we have such a good oven."

"Now," said William, when they had finished their family prayers, "I must go, if you please, Mrs. Ellis, for I too have plenty of work to do. I must collect all my boys together, and see that they are cleanly and properly dressed; but Tom, you and I must first go to Mr. Ingram's for the flags."

"The flags! What flags?" asked Edward.

"Oh!" replied Tom, "you know, William, that was to be a secret, and now ye've told!"

"Oh, I quite forgot," said William, "I declare; but Mrs. Ellis knew about them; and I'm sure Alice and Edward won't say anything until everybody sees them."

"No, indeed we won't," replied Edward; "but just tell us what they are like, William; I do so much want to know."

"Well," answered William, who couldn't resist the little coaxing voice. "First, there is a fine white flag, with a light blue border, and in the middle of it are the words—'Peace and goodwill to man,' worked with blue worsted. Then, there's a blue flag, with a white border, and that has on it, worked in white—'Little children, love one another.' And then there's a bright crimson flag, *with a beautiful border of vine-leaves, and this*

inscription in the middle—' Success to our Village School!' ”

“ Oh, how grand they will look ! ” exclaimed Edward, whose merry eyes sparkled with delight at the prospect of the afternoon's pleasure.

Music and flags ! What little heart does not leap at the sight and sound ? It must be a very insensible one that does not. I am thankful to say we have none such in our village.

“ And who's to carry the flags, William ? ” asked curly pate.

“ Why, *you* are too little, Edward ; they must be strong boys or men to carry them. Tom will be one, I think ; but come, come, Tom, we must be off ! ”

And away they started, after bidding good day to the inmates of Rose Cottage.

CHAPTER XI.

Now, where shall you and I go next, dear? Shall we pay a visit to Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Richards, or to Mrs. Smith? The old acquaintances, you know, and we want what preparation they are making for the

I suppose we shall have to call on all, and begin with Mrs. Banks, that very busy, bustling dame. Here she is, full of bustling in this morning, for the house must be "set" before she can make herself ready to go on with the pigs, and the poultry, and the dairy (though only a small one) have all been attended to yesterday, and there are only the beds to make and the kitchen to clean. But even now the parlor is waiting for us.

"You're a bad girl," said her mother; "you don't know, I dare say, what you did with your frock on Sunday; but if you *did* put it where you say, it will be there now, for nobody would take it out. Look into the press again, and make haste, or you'll be too late, and father and I won't wait for you, we want to see the children walking two and two."

"Well, and I'm to walk with them," said Sally, dolefully; "but how can I if I don't find my frock?"

"Why," replied her mother, "Mary's nearly ready; she takes care of her things; she hasn't to hunt about for them as you have; I wish Mrs. Ellis would teach you to be careful with your clothes."

"Mrs. Ellis has nothing to do with them," said Sally, going sulkily to the press; and after tumbling everything over, this time, she did find the missing frock, though when it was pulled out it was seen to be in a most untidy condition. Putting it on as fast as she could, she ran to her sister to have it fastened; but Mary, though a tidy, was by no means a kind girl; so, looking very cross at Sally, she said—

"I've a great mind not to do it at all for you. Why don't you take more care of your things? I should'nt like my frock to look so tumbled as yours does for anything."

"I can't help it," said Sally, almost ready to cry, as her sister gave her sundry twitches and pulls in fastening her frock.

"Yes, you *can* help it, if you like, answered Mary; "can't you put your frock by when you take it off as well as me?"

"I was so tired on Sunday," said Sally.

"Oh, you're *always* tired then, I suppose, for you never put your things away."

"Well, you need'nt be so cross, Mary, I do many things for you."

And this was very true, for Sally was a kind-hearted girl, though a careless and untidy one; and if her mother, instead of scolding, had taken a little more pains to teach her, she would have been by far the nicer girl of the two; but, like many other persons that I know, Dame Banks was much more careful about her household concerns than of the dispositions and habits of her children; and as their evil propensities were not nipt in the bud, they took root, and bore fruit that was anything but pleasant. But the time is passing rapidly away, and we have not only to take a look in at good Mrs. Richards and her well-ordered family, but we are to call at the "ne'er-do-weels," as Dame Wheeler nicknames the Smiths. Rather ill-natured this of Goody Wheeler.

Mrs. Richards was drest, for she had put away *all washing and folding and ironing* for that day.

She was determined to make it a whole holiday. Very nice she looked in her widow's cap, for she still wore one ; her black stuff dress, and neat, plain bonnet, not, you may be sure, children, stuck merely on the back part of her head. Katy and Ann, with their clean, printed frocks, and tippets of the same material, and their plain, white straw bonnets, did credit to their good mother, both in appearance and behaviour ; and Jane, the eldest daughter, was really the very picture of neatness itself.

"Jane," said Mrs. Richards to this good amiable girl ; "have you got the pears ready, that we have to take with us?"

"They are ready, mother," answered Jane ; "but Mr. Ingram told me we had better not take anything for the tea until it was wanted, except our cups and saucers, and tea-pot ; he thinks it is not well to hold out temptation to the younger children."

"He is quite right in that, Jane. Mr. Ingram I think is always in the right ; and now let's go down to Rose Cottage, for we have plenty of time, girls ; and I long to see dear Mrs. Ellis this cheerful morning. I'll be bound to say she's as busy as a bee. And yet," added the good dame in an altered tone ; "there'll be some sorrowful thoughts come over her, in spite of all her joy about the new school. Still if it had not been for her poor

dear husband's death, I don't believe the school would have been built this many a year to come."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Ann, "we are so glad you are going down to Rose Cottage; we want to see Alice, and Edward, to know if we may walk in the procession with *them* to the school-room."

"And," added Katy, the younger of the two, "don't you want, Ann, to see those nice cakes Mrs. Ellis has made? Oh, such a lot of them! Alice told me there would be nearly three hundred; yes, and they have been getting all their beautiful grapes for the feast, mother. Is'nt it kind of Mrs. Ellis?"

"It is just like *her*," replied Mrs. Richards; "she would rather give, than receive, any time; and I am quite sure she could never think she did enough to show her gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Ingram. And indeed, indeed, they deserve it, for I'm sure there never were better people in the world."

Poor Mrs. Richards! Her knowledge of the world extended very little beyond the small village of B——; and yet she had judged very accurately. And now the door has closed behind this humble, cheerful, happy party, and as we too are turned out, dear reader, we will, if you please, walk on to *Dame Smith's*, instead of encumbering Mrs. Ellis's

little cottage with our presence; for the good woman has quite enough to do I assure you.

Still comfortless, but much improved in its appearance since this time last year, we shall find the abode we are now entering.

Dame Smith has profited by the good advice, and gentle persuasion of Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, for they have both visited her from time to time, and have done all they could for her. Nor must I forget to tell you that good Mrs. Ellis, who sincerely pitied the forlorn mother, and her neglected half-clothed children, had often given the latter a share of their small dinner; and although she had no clothes herself to give them, yet by begging an old gown or two from the neighbours, and a pair of old trowsers from the clergyman, she had contrived to get for these poor children something that would enable them to make their appearance with the others at the feast, although as you shall hear, there were still some wants. We may be sure, gentle reader, that it was difficult to unlearn both them and their mother the bad habits that had grown with them; but Alice and her brother, as well as Mrs. Ellis, had taken great pains to teach these ignorant ones. They had given them slips of plants, and young cabbages, and many other things to put into their garden after it had been cleared of all the weeds; and these kind children often went down after school was over, to show the little Smiths how to

prized and great care taken of them were often the means of keeping the little ones out of mischief.

Thus, on the whole, we may expect improvement upon our former visit. "shoes are so bad," said Bobby, ashamed to walk with the other boys.'

"And my bonnet's so shabby," said "beside the other girls."

"Well, well, I can't help it, child Mrs. Smith, "I'll get you some cloth ever I can. I tried hard last week to expect purpose to get you a pair of shoes, but I went for bread ; father gave us nothing

"Look, mother, at my foot," said the "isn't it sore?" and the foot was put mother to examine. with the skin quite

"Oh, I wish father wouldn't go there any more," said the poor boy, "and then we should have money enough to buy clothes when we want them."

"Hush, lad! here's father coming," answered his mother.

And just at that moment, Ned Smith came in, quite sober, for a wonder. Perhaps he felt afraid lest, all the village being astir, he should be seen by many he would rather keep out of the way of. Or, it might be, that those of his acquaintance who were not so much given to drink as he was, didn't feel disposed to join him on such a day as this. Whatever the cause might be, he was sober, as I said; and what is quite as wonderful, he had some money in his pocket. Though, after all, it wasn't wonderful, for his being sober was the very reason why he *had* the money in his pocket; it had not been spent in drink.

"Ned," said Mrs. Smith, "we are all going to the school feast, will you go with us?"

"Not I," replied Ned; "nobody would like to see me there, I reckon."

"You needn't say that, father," said Hannah; "for Mr. Ingram told me to ask you to come, and Mrs. Ellis said, 'Mind and bring your father with you, Hannah.'"

"Well, but I'm not going," said Smith. "I saw many of them down yonder in their holiday

clothes; but I have none to put on, so I shan't go."

"I'm sure none of us have got any holiday clothes," said the dame; "but I don't care about that, if it wasn't for poor Bob's feet."

"Why, what's the matter with his feet?" asked Ned.

"Look, father," said the boy, and the sore foot was again held up for inspection.

"Well, it is a bad place and no mistake," said the father; "how did it come?"

The child held up the torn shoe, and Smith took it in his hand, and looked at it for a minute. Then he got up, and walked out of the cottage, without saying a word. "Lack-a-day! lack-a-day!" cried Dame Smith, "there he goes again, off to the public-house; he minds nothing about us, all he thinks of is the drink."

But in this Mrs. Smith was mistaken, I am happy to say. Her husband had not gone where she thought he had; he walked now much more briskly than was usual with him, perhaps he was afraid he should lose his good resolutions by the way, if he did not make haste. He didn't stop at all, then, till he came to the only shoemaker's shop in the village; and he bought a nice pair of clogs for his boy, and I will venture to say (though he did not tell me this), that he felt happier in his ~~walk~~ home, than weeks of ale-house enjoyment

would have made him. Great joy for poor little Bobby, and pleasure and astonishment in Dame Smith, was caused by the sight of the new shoes. Bob declared, as he tried them on, that they did not hurt the sore place a bit, though, had you looked in the poor fellow's face, you would have been half inclined to disbelieve him.

And now the Smiths are ready for a start, and they, as well as the Richards's, must go by themselves. *We*, gentle reader, have more persons to see, more places to visit, before we meet the whole of the happy party in the field of the school-room.

CHAPTER XII.

It is right we should begin a fresh chapter, for we have quite a new set of persons to deal with. This is certainly a day of rejoicing to rich and poor. We have been travelling about the village since early morning, and we have seen nothing but happy faces, and clean holiday suits. Shall we have time to pay a visit to the Manor-house? I think we shall. But dear, good Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, what *is* become of *them*? Why, kind reader, they are, and have been all day so very busy, that it would be quite a shame to intrude on them, so we will, if you please, go and see what the Squire and his family are doing. It is, I assure you, the very, very place we ought to go to at once, for are not all the boys and girls, and the band, and the flags to be there? Yes, they are all to be drawn up in marching procession on the lawn in front of the house; and there is James the butler, and John the footman, and all the maids as busy as ever they can be at this very moment. James and John are arranging the village band, and *putting the flags in order*, whilst William and Tom,

and the whole of the lads and lasses, will be there before us, if we don't make haste.

Now let me introduce you to the family at the Manor-house. There is our worthy Squire, good Mr. Langdale, tall and stout and handsome—a real Englishman; not a short, fat John Bull, such as you have seen perhaps in silly pictures and papers, but a downright country gentleman. Beside him is his lady; she is tall and handsome too, but not nearly so good-looking as she has been. You should have seen her twenty years ago, little reader; but never mind, you shall see the daughters, and they will give you an idea how handsome Mrs. Langdale *was*, for they are both very like their mother. But is there not a son? Oh, yes, to be sure; young Mr. Langdale, or the young squire as our village people call him. He is slim and genteel now, but, mark my words, he will be a stout handsome man, like his father, if he lives. There they are, all at the windows of that old Manor-house, enjoying the scene before them very much indeed.

"Well, I think we may call this the happiest, if not the loveliest, village of the plain to-day," said the Squire, "for I never saw a set of merrier faces."

"Nor I either, Frederick," said his wife; "I really believe in time I shall learn to be contented with spending my days here."

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~~SECRET~~

ditties. I know we should not be dull at all here in the winter, for we have music, and books, and drawing, and work, and country visits to pay at Christmas time, and friends to receive, and——”

“And an unfortunate brother to *tease*,” interrupted Mr. Edwin.

“No, no; to *please*, sir,” cried both his laughing sisters at the same time, running to him, and each putting an arm round him, and saying—“Now, Edwin, if you were a lady instead of a gentleman, we might personate the Graces.”

“But, just see what you’re doing, girls,” said their brother; “exposing me to the ridicule of all these rustics who have assembled there; see, they are every one of them staring, and, of course, laughing at poor me.”

“They would all envy you, sir, if they *could*,” said Miss Langdale; “but they are too good to envy any one, for

‘Simple in life, in manners, and in dress,—
Small store is theirs, yet still enough to bless.’”

“Why,” said Mr. Edwin, “really, Charlotte, you must have caught a spark of my inspiration; take care it does not set your dress on fire; but away with you, fair damsels, if you please. I can’t afford to divide my muse with you, she is too little of stature yet; besides, the Graces don’t want

you'll have to trudge on foot to-day, there's no carriage for you ; this is a holiday for servants and horses included."

" Well, papa, are we to walk in the park," asked Caroline. " If so, which of the party are you to have, for I am I to have, for And which is Charlotte to have? O Charlotte, choose for ourselves, please, papa?"

" Oh, choose for yourselves by all means," said Mr. Langdale, " you have *my* permission, ladies ; but who, do you think, of all the party there, would be troubled with either of you, graceless as you are?"

" Oh, papa," replied Miss Langdale, " I'm sure I'm mistaken! *Graceful* you mean, I'm sure," said Caroline. " let's make our choice."

Master Edward Ellis of the curly-pate. See, there he is, papa, with a smart Scotch cap on, and looking, I declare, quite a little warrior. See, how kindly he takes his sister, the gentle Alice, by the hand, and looks up into her face; and now, see, he is looking at you, Charlotte; why I protest, you have made my little hero blush, that is too bad of you."

"Oh, 'tis for pleasure, you know, Caroline; but come, let us go; papa, and mamma, and Edwin have left us, you see."

And the two young ladies, having put on their straw hats, joined the happy party on the lawn.

Oh, what smiling faces and kind greetings are here! As the good Squire and his lady, with their son and daughters, pass from one to another shaking hands and making various inquiries on family matters, which, gentle reader, we need not enter into. But here is our dear Mrs. Ellis, how pleased and happy she looks, even though she has got on her black dress and her widow's cap. She is not insensible to the mercies she has received, and she does not mourn for the departed as those who have no hope; her heart is now full of thankfulness as she looks upon her two sweet, dear, dutiful children; and such are indeed a mother's blessing. This has been, I think, a long chapter. Before the procession moves we will commence another.

CHAPTER XLII.

"Now then, now then, good people order, if you please," cried the Squid time we began the march. Come, my said he to Edward, "you must leave his sister's hand, and walk with a boy of age. Here, William, you have to arrange matters, I believe."

And William was not slow in performing his task; of course, he knew nothing of Edward's engagement of him, and she did not think proper to urge any claim on her champion as she did that his hands were strong and full enough. And now, all being placed, the music strikes up, and the party moves on, streaming banners, which by the way

mind what a parson we had then? He ware so high and mighty, that we ware a most afeard to look at un, and I b'leve he thought sheam a preaching to us poor folk, and as to visiting un, as our good parson does, why he never dreamt on't."

"Nay," said old Rogers, "all he ever dreamt on ware his tithes; he tuk care enough o' them, I'se warrant. As to his lady, who ever see her in a poor body's cottage? All we see'd on her ware in't church-pew corner, all cushioned up like, and kept out a the way a' poor folks. Weel, to my mind, these times is better than the auld ones; but lookee here, they be a cummin." And the whole procession appeared in sight at that moment, and the gallant show and the cheerful sound of the music set many a heart beating, though the feet might be old and cramped, while the latter added greatly to the general joy and gaiety.

I wonder why music is not always employed on these festive occasions, at least wherever it is possible to have it. Is not the song of the birds cheering in the early morning, and their loud, clear ringing notes delightful to the ear?—

What time the dew is on the grass,
And the golden sun is setting,
While shadows o'er the mountains pass,
And man, his toils forgetting—
*Lives a short space on holier ground,
By the sweet harmony of sound.*

Yes, surely music is intended for our delight and refreshment, and therefore should be cultivated and adopted on all possible occasions. But we must return to the village band; for now the whole party have arrived, and there are warm greetings and congratulations, and shaking of hands between the party from the Manor-house and our good friends the Ingrams, not forgetting little Nelly, who, with her nurse, is a delighted spectator of the grand display. She hears herself greeted by loving, but inconsiderate young ladies, as "a lovely child," "a dear darling pet," as "a sweet pretty creature;" all of which compliments Miss Nelly takes quite philosophically, and, as a matter of course, paying, however, much more attention to the stirring scene around her, than to the young flatterers who are endeavouring to gain her favour.

"'Ift me up, pease, Soodan," said she to the nurse, "I want to te de fags."

You must know, kind reader, that though little Nelly is twelve months older than when we last saw her, she is still an infant in speech. Susan lifted her up, and now the whole party, at least as many of them as there is room for, walk into the new school-house, preceded by Mr. Ingram and William, who were to place the children on their several forms.

When this had been done, the worthy Squire,

gave way to their elders, and each desirous that his neighbour should see well as himself; especially this was the parents of the children, who were the school, were concerned; *they* were a place given up to them, if they did not get one. Does not this speak greatly in village population? And don't you think that the good rector and his kind little Squire and his amiable family, have a deal to do with this? I do.

But now, all that can get into the room sitting or standing, as the case may be. The Squire, who is seated on a high chair covered with evergreens and flowers, a company. Let us hear what he says.

"I am really very glad to meet -

by the goodness of God, we have been enabled to bring this work of ours to a completion. The school is ready, and I am most happy to see that, although ours is only a small village, the forms are already filled with scholars, which shows that you know how to put a right value on the blessings of education. And now, my friends, you must listen to what I am going to propose. It is, that we offer up earnest prayers to the Almighty for His blessing on this school now and ever; and that while we do so, we should also give Him thanks and praise for past mercies. To your esteemed and justly dear friend and pastor, I leave this solemn duty, which, I think, we should all join in; and I should therefore wish some one to give notice to those outside to assemble round the door."

This was soon done, and the hearty response when Mr. Ingram concluded his truly affecting prayer for teachers, scholars, and all concerned in this good work, showed that one mind, and one spirit—the spirit of love—breathed through the whole of the little community.

After prayers were over, Mr. Ingram addressed a few words to his parishioners. I need not tell you, dear reader, all his speech; how he spoke of the blessings of education, such education as might tend to make them better men and women, more useful to society for having those talents improved, which

a loving Creator had given to each of them, and the inestimable benefit of being able to read and understand the holy Word of God. All this, of course he spoke of, and then he added—

“And now I have a proposal to make, which I hope will not be objected to. You all know that many more scholars will attend this school-room than Rose Cottage could have received. And Mrs. Ellis will have quite as much as she can do to teach the girls; so, I propose that William Wheeler, who, from personal knowledge, I can tell you is quite competent to the task, should for the future take the boys under his management.”

There was a burst of applause from the boys' side of the room on hearing this, for William Wheeler was a prime favourite with the lads, nay, I think, I may say with the whole village. There was also another feeling at work amongst the youngsters. Many of the elder boys thought that to be under a mistress was beneath their dignity, and though Mrs. Ellis was as much liked by all as William Wheeler was, the boys would rather not be under her tuition, and so this announcement of the new teacher was hailed with delight.

“And now, my boys and girls, and all you my very good friends,” continued Mr. Ingram, “nothing remains for us but to adjourn to the *pleasant field* and spend the remainder of the *day in enjoyment*, I hope with thankful, as well

as merry hearts, for the blessings and comforts which Divine Providence has given us."

Do you wonder, dear reader, that, in all this, there were not thanks given to the Squire, who had built the school, nor to the ladies of his family, who had helped to make it so comfortable within; nor to Mr. and Mrs. Ingram for their steadfast exertions in the village for the good of all, especially of the children; nor to Mrs. Ellis who had carried on her school so creditably for twelve months at Rose Cottage? I will let you into the secret. These worthy people knew well that they were only (as was their duty) employing talents which had been *given* to them for the very purpose of being so employed, and they sought not the praise of men, but a far greater thing than that—the approval of their Heavenly Father, that they might hear Him say when their work on earth was finished,—“Well done good and faithful servants, you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you rulers over many things. Enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

AND now, what a lively, happy scene is before us. About three hundred people assembled on the green.

* The ladies of the party, and some seated on the benches under the tree, if people have moved away, and are waiting youngsters who are playing at cricket, or or ball. But good Mrs Ingram, where wonder? We will go in search of her certainly is not under the tree with the

No, there she is, near that very large tree in the middle of the field, but still under the shade of trees; for there are two very large trees each other, but not too near to prevent being placed between them, thereby leaving a space where the men who are standing

to the matrons, and helping to put all things in order. Yes, and James, and John are there too, no slight assistance I assure you, kind readers ; for they are practised hands, and know how such things should be done. See how nicely the cakes are cut and piled up on plates, and the pears and apples intermixed, giving quite a gay appearance to the whole ; and the grapes, oh, those beautiful grapes ! set out so nicely in several small baskets with leaves all round them. Well, this is no common tea drinking ! And I declare, there is Mr. Ingram's bunch of grapes all by itself in the small basket, just as Alice had placed it in the morning ; and now she is showing it to Mrs. Ingram, and telling that lady that Edward had declared when he gathered it, that it was for Mr. Ingram, and nobody else.

"No, my dear, that must not be ; it would not be right to give my husband anything better than you would give to Mr. Langdale."

"Oh, Mrs. Ingram," replied Alice ; "I am sure Mr. Langdale would not be at all offended, for I know very well he likes Mr. Ingram as well as anybody does, and he would be glad to see him have this bunch of grapes."

"Well spoken, dear child," said Miss Langdale, who had come up behind them unnoticed, and heard the latter part of this conversation ; "well, and truly spoken, for no one can have more esteem for Mr. Ingram than dear papa has," said she,

giving Alice a kiss; "and Mr. Ingram *shall* have the bunch of grapes, for we all love him dearly, don't we, Alice?"

"I do," replied the gentle girl; "for he is so good, and kind."

"There now, you hear Mrs. Ingram, and you are not to be angry, for we *can't help* loving your husband you see."

Thus, the bunch of grapes was adjudged to be Mr. Ingram's, and the work went on until all the arrangements were completed. And now the party were to be summoned to tea, not by a flourish of trumpets, but yet by musical invitation, for the band went up to them playing, "Haste to the Wedding;" and although that was not exactly what was intended, it answered the purpose extremely well, every one knew what was meant.

"Caroline," said Miss Langdale to her sister, "we must contrive to make ourselves useful, for until now we have been drones in the hive; we must help to make the honey for these good folks, who are clustering round us like a swarm of bees."

But although Miss Langdale called herself and her sister drones, I assure you, gentle reader, they did not at all deserve such a name. Whose fingers had been so busy as theirs in making and *decorating the flags*, and in preparing the nice *bags for the girls' school*? And who, I wonder, made the

prettiest of the wreaths and garlands to grace the walls their good father had raised for the benefit of the little village community? And who was it that teased the poor old cook at the Manor-house to send this and that to the school feast, until the old body got quite into a bad temper, and said, "Bless us, young ladies! I think ye want to send everything in the house away to that feast."

"Now, don't, Betty, don't be cross," said Miss Langdale, "there's a dear old woman."

Betty had lived in the family thirty years, long before either of the young ladies was born, and she was a kind of privileged person. "Well," said Betty, "I 'spose ye must ha'e it all your own way, so just tell me what I be to send, miss."

There was no stint, either in measure or weight with the young ladies; they proved themselves anything but drones there, for such a collection of sweet things could not be found in any hive in the kingdom, to say nothing of the little village of B——.

Now, dear reader, having taken you aside a short time, just to place the Misses Langdale before you in the true light, we will, if you please, go with the party to the tea-table, for all is quite ready, you know. The young ladies, as they engaged, began to make themselves busy by seating the children and old people in the most convenient places, for a comfortable tea.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

a matron or young lady had her number assigned, for whom she was to make this was done in the old-fashioned way out of a teapot, not from jugs, so there was good tea; and then by the side of a large fire had been kindled, close to a ring of water. Round this fire might come thirty tea-kettles, boiling and hissing as if they were calling out to be taken off; *they were* taken off too, pretty quickly, I think, for the merry waiters of the party had been running backwards and forwards they ran with the tea first to one then to another, the scene was very animating. There was no want of volunteers, the difficulty was in deciding who should be accepted in that capacity. Of course it was not to reject the smaller boys, they must

but the two Misses Langdale were to be let off with the first set. "And why was that?" asks an inquisitive little reader. Why, you must know, my dear, that these two young ladies were very important personages, for they had undertaken the arduous task of finding amusement for at least one-fourth of the village population; that is to say, the girls, while the boys were at their tea; and I'm sure, if you had seen Charlotte and Caroline, with their merry, handsome faces, inventing games and joining in them with as much glee as if their own childish days had come back to them again, to the great delight of their little village playmates, you would have thought, as I do, that they had chosen the very best possible mode of being useful.

But we have not left the tea-table yet, I have only been giving the reason why the Misses Langdale were not going to stay there to give the boys their tea.

"What excellent cakes you have made us, Mrs. Ellis," said the Squire's lady. "I must get cook to come and take a lesson from you."

Mrs. Ellis only *looked* pleased by way of reply. She was very, very busy just at that moment; for she had twenty little mouths to fill with tea and that same good cake. Twenty was the number assigned to each tea-maker, and the lady of the Manor had her share among the rest; she sat at

the head of the table, and Mr. Ingram was one of her party, while Mrs. Ingram took the other and entertained the Squire, and thus "honours were divided." Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Banks, Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Richards, and some other farmers' wives, whom I have not been able for want of time to introduce to you, took their share of the trouble and pleasure in helping the happy party.

I am glad to tell you, that there was perfect order at the table. Every one seemed to know how to behave properly, and yet all were at their ease. And there were plenty of cakes and tea, and other good things for all, though we think there will have to be three different parties at the tea-table, for in the distance we see advancing Mrs. Betty, the cook, and the housemaid, and the dairy-maid, and the laundry-maid. Why, surely, the whole of the inmates of the Manor-house are met together here! Evidently Mrs. Langdale has been determined to carry out the good Squire's declaration, that "it should be a holiday for all." But the young ladies are on the move, and, I think, before we introduce you to them on the play-ground, kind reader, we must begin a new chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

"Now, kind folks all," said Miss Langdale, in her merry laughing way, "I give you fair notice, that we fifty good people and true intend to resign our seats, that they may be at the service of the next elected; and if there are any laggards among you, they must be content to follow where we take the lead."

Saying this, she made a move, which was seconded by her sister, and followed too by all the young tribe at the tea-table; while the busy matrons and the indefatigable waiters made quick preparation to receive the second party that the merry young ladies had gone to summon. And now the table is again replenished, and fresh tea and new piles of cakes, and apples, and pears, are waiting the arrival of that kind of gentry, always willing to do credit to "Cheer Boys, Cheer!" But all this time, says my reader, what has become of the Squire and Mr. Ingram? You don't tell us anything about them. Well, you must remember they are but cyphers among so many females, now you will see that they are of some importance, for here is the whole troop of

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“ Well, you may
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things; but howsumdever," added the honest man, screwing up his courage to speak out, "I'se down-rate glad to be at this tea-drinking, 'cause I knows it'll do good to a vast a folks, and we're aw much obleeged to ye gentlefolks for your kindness." And here Mr. Wheeler looked first towards the Squire, and then to Mr. Ingram, at the sight of whom his honest heart seemed to fill, while he added,—“And God bless you, sir, for aw the guid ye ha dune in this place.”

“Thank you, my kind friend,” said Mr. Ingram; “God *has* blessed me, and all, I think, who have had a hand in this good work, by bringing it to so happy a conclusion; and I only hope that we shall never, while we live, forget His mercies to us.”

But who, in the name of wonder, is it that breaks in so abruptly on the good clergyman's speech? Oh, Miss Langdale! I am sure you must have been too much excited to hear what was going on, or *you* would not have done it.

“Come along, Edwin, this moment,” said she, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks glowing with health and animation. “Come along this moment, sir,” said she, in an imperative but very sweet tone, laying her hand on her brother's shoulder; “how can you sit quietly there, taking your tea with these honest people, when a host of distressed damsels require your aid?”

"Well, sir, your grace is
loose. Of course it was very natural
wish to have a holiday, as well as the rest,
no objection to that, if he knew how
himself; but he does not, though he's
Mr. Edwin Langdale; and so," continued
lady, "while we were all having a capital
a round ring, he bounced in among us
remoniously, knocking down about half
the youngsters, and then in his joy
found us, leaping upon Caroline and
her too."

This announcement, shocking as it
caused a peal of laughter from the
party.

"Well, you may laugh at us," said
dale, but I assure you the poor cl

"I don't wonder at it," replied his sister; "she is every body's favourite, I think. But come, Edwin, come along with you, sir; don't stay talking there."

And away went the young Squire, leaving Miss Langdale to follow, while just then another scream from the children gave evidence that Mr. Bounder had by no means finished his gambols. He was a fine Newfoundland dog, young and playful, but very harmless, as these dogs generally are. This second scream was caused, however, by Bounder catching sight of his young master coming, running towards them, and of course, taking it all to mean play, our hero started off to meet him in his own unwieldy fashion, thereby again tumbling over one or two of the little ones, who just then, by Miss Caroline's persuasion, were beginning to be more courageous, and had approached near enough to stroke his curly coat.

"Oh, poor things, poor things," said the kind young lady, lifting the little ones up, and caressing them. "Bounder, you really are a sad dog!" but Master Bounder was far enough out of hearing of this reproof, for he had reached the young Squire, and was leaping up to receive the usual caress. But Bounder, though very innocently, had disgraced himself to-day, and he must be reproved for his rashness, for he had caused the only unpleasantness that had occurred,

"Down, sir, down!" cried his master; "what have you been doing?"

And, gentle reader, you would really have thought, had you seen him, that the poor animal felt himself guilty, for he hung down his head and whined a little, and touched his master's hand with his nose, and then looked wistfully up into his face, as much as to say, "will you forgive me?"

"Well, come along, sir, and make your apologies to the ladies," said Mr. Edwin, approaching the half-laughing, half-crying group, in the midst of whom was Miss Caroline still kneeling, and endeavouring to reassure the little ones.

Now, sir, sit up in the middle of this young party, and beg for pardon," said the young Squire.

The obedient dog instantly obeyed, for he sat up on his haunches, and put up his two great fore-paws, as he had been taught, a very pattern of obedience to children, who, I am sorry to say, do not always so readily do what they are told, notwithstanding all their teaching. A general laugh was the result, and then Bounder was further ordered to lie down all his length on the grass, and either go to sleep or pretend to do so.

The faithful creature did as he was bid, stretching himself all his length, and shutting his eyes to the no small amusement of the little tribe, who *now were no longer* afraid of the docile animal.

"Now, children," said the young Squire, "we'll

all have a dance round him, and you shall see he won't stir till I tell him. Come, Caroline, come, Alice; you shall be my partners, and Bounder shall lie there until we are tired of dancing, as a punishment for his offences."

"Oh, don't punish him, sir, don't punish poor Bounder; he did not mean to hurt," sounded from many little voices.

And Alice said, "he is only a dog, you know, Mr. Edwin."

"But," replied that gentleman, "a *dog* must be taught to behave well, Alice; and we are not doing Bounder any harm, you know, in making him lie still, while we dance round him."

And so the ring was formed by the now merry set; but this time they had music to dance to, and what was more than the young Squire had bargained for, they had a whole crowd of admiring spectators; the party from the table having finished their tea, had come to witness poor Bounder's humiliation, and the triumph of justice."

"And now," said Mr. Edwin, "I think you can do without me, girls; for I shall only spoil your dance by my awkwardness, so good-by."

"Nonsense, Edwin," replied his sisters; "we can't, and we won't do without you. Just look at that sly dog of yours. I see he is ready to make a leap in among us the moment you leave."

And, indeed, this was the real truth; for

...
cians struck up a lively tune ; "you a
to escape us, Mr. Edwin, to forfeit y
ment with Alice and myself. Why,
not ask us to dance with you ; and wo
shameful of you to disappoint us ?"

" Well, well," replied the young
" I see there's no help for it ; you girl
all your own way, so I suppose I mu
front on it, and brave all the laugh
good people here," turning and mak
the bystanders.

So the dancing commenced and wa
the saying is, with great spirit, till lit
fairly tired out, and little feet were
tripping, for the grass was not
not like it was on the lawn of th

caress which he had failed to obtain before he had undergone his punishment. And now, dear reader, we need not, I think, go back to the tea-table, where the musicians are gone to refresh themselves after their toils; and where James, and John, and the jolly coachman, and the maids belonging to the Manor-house are seated, and the active, willing waiters beside them. Quite as merry a party, and quite as good cheer is here as on the two former occasions: for there is a fresh brewing of tea, and a fresh supply of cakes, and, I think, to be sure, that that sly Mrs. Betty, although she seemed so cross at first, must have had a batch of cakes there of her own baking; for I hear her recommending them not to be afraid of eating, for "there be plenty for all, and to spare." And see, kind reader, as one good turn deserves another, the last waited upon have themselves turned waiters, and sundry small urchins are very busy handing the kettles, and though they do contrive now and then to blacken a shoulder of the maids, or come rather too near the men's whiskers with their hot-water machines, they manage quite as well as we could expect from novices.

But the day is drawing to an end, the shades of evening are closing round us, and the dews are beginning to fall; and though the moon is rising, it is not safe to keep our young party in the damp grass much longer. See, in the distance there is

as she is fast asleep in bed, we shall
say good night to her. Mr. and M
with full hearts and happy counten
they do seem rather tired with th
ertions, are standing near the scho
the Squire's party, waiting for th
together of the elder children and
people, that he may give them a pa
tion. Once more he speaks to his
the mercy and goodness of their Hea
calling their attention to the bou
that had filled their hearts with gla
health and happiness with which th
been blessed ; to the peace and com
they were surrounded, and the kind
existed between rich and poor, an
which prevailed in the former to forv

to please those who have spent their money and time to serve you. Let us now, before we separate, offer our thanks to the Creator, and pray for His continued blessing;" and the good pastor knelt down, and asked for that blessing upon his dear people, which could alone make them happy for time and for eternity—the presence and the teaching of God's holy spirit—the spirit of grace and truth!

CHAPTER X

AND thus ended the day of feast ; but my little readers, anxious to hear some further favourites. I take it for granted that good people I have been favourites ; for my own part I among them all my days in their, where, though there is there is contentment, which is riches, and good feeling and neighbourliness, which make all much happier and grand entertainments can then, to the village-school ; it is the opening, and a quiet, order girls are assembled, and good M

What an increase of scholars they have! Mrs. Ellis's cottage would not hold one-half of them. We heartily wish prosperity to the new school! Even though it is the first morning, there is no confusion, so well has all been managed. Books and work and writing materials all ready. It is true, girls who never knew the use of a needle before, are rather stupid about handling it, and poor Alice I suspect, has her patience sorely tried by the awkward attempt at putting in stitches; but to her and her good mother's credit, be it spoken, before twelve months were past, these same tiresome girls could make a shirt for their father, or a frock for their little sister, and this, it may be supposed, contributed much more to the comfort of their parents, than suffering them to run wild for the want of some useful employment.

But the girls were taught to mend, as well as to make their clothes; darning stockings; and putting in patches, were considered by Mrs. Ellis very important parts of a girl's education; every woman, she would say to her daughter, should know how to read and write, but she should also know all these duties, which, well performed, tend so greatly to make others comfortable.

Alice herself was a pattern to all little girls, for she was *never* idle, and I think I may say as a consequence that she was always cheerful and happy;

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

nothing for mother, or for Edward, she had
she knew would give pleasure, and this brought
pleasure to her own kind and affectionate little
Well, I assure you, children, that this new
a real *school of industry*; for not only
the work done in it, but the ladies at the
our dear Mrs. Ingram, had provided and
(with Mrs. Ellis's assistance) a large number
ful things, shirts, and frocks, and other articles
clothing, which were all to be made up by
school girls, and to be disposed of at low prices
the villagers when the anniversary of
"village school-feast" should come round.
Before that time, you would have been surprised
had peeped into the large closet (shelved
and for Mrs. Ellis's use) at the sight of
bundles of good clothing laid up there.
But the boys I should tell you were not

shelves were clothes' and market-baskets, which proved that the good dames of the village had not been neglected in the anxiety to supply the ladies' work-table.

But, dear reader; I am not disposed to tell you all that happened in our quiet village throughout the year ; my chief business is with the school, so, taking it for granted that all went on well with the good management of Mrs. Ellis, and the steady, orderly conduct of William, not, however, forgetting the kind visits to the school of Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, Mrs. Langdale, and her two clever and lively daughters, I now invite you to attend the first anniversary of the "village school-feast." There is not to be any tea-drinking this time, for there is a great deal of other business to be done. The tables are spread, but not with cups and saucers ; instead of these, you perceive they are well piled up with wearing apparel.

What ! bonnets, and cloaks, and gowns, and boys' clothing, as well as plenty of good calico made up. Where did all these come from ? The girls could not have made all these !

No, children, certainly not ; I will let you into the secret before the sale begins.

Miss Langdale and her sister did not confine their kindness to the *children* of the village ; their visits to the poor cottages were unceasing. Never a week passed without seeing them, with light steps

text or two of comfort and encourage
the words of our Blessed Lord, to those
not perhaps able to read, or had no
privilege of learning in their early days
has all this to do with the bonnets and
Miss Mary, or Miss Sarah, or some
Not much, indeed, my dears, except the
going to tell you as to *how* they came
part of the thoughtful kindness of
ladies' characters.

The plan they adopted to get their
I think, a very good plan; one that was
service to the poor people in any place
be introduced.

They called upon everybody they knew
wrote to their friends to send them
kind that they had left off with

Really, I think this will be quite a grand sale, for the company is large already, though it is only eleven o'clock. And don't suppose, children, that it is to be *only* a sale, and nothing more; no, no! that would be dry work, indeed, for the girls and boys; we can still afford a feast to the young ones, though there *will* be no tea-drinking. There is plenty of nice new-milk, and buns of Mrs. Ellis's making, though this time her labours have been shared by Mrs. Betty, who considered herself rather slighted on a former occasion, and whose good graces the Misses Langdale found it quite necessary to cultivate, if they expected soup and broth, and sundry nice bits to pass through their hands to the poor. But besides milk and buns, bread and cheese and home-brewed ale were to take their place on the long tables, as soon as the clothing could be so disposed of as to make room for them. Then we have the band, too, the enlivening band, and the streaming flags are not forgotten; there they are, waving in what little wind there is, and they look as bright and beautiful, as they did this time twelvemonths.

Stationed at the table, whom do we see? The good Squire and his lady, his blooming daughters, and his handsome son; dear Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, Mrs. Ellis, and William. The ladies have undertaken the management of the sale. And now, all is ready, the day is as fine as it was last year at

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL,

me; the corn is reaped, and it is all gathered in; the harvest has been an early one; all happy to beat high with pleasure, if you may judge by the smiling looks; see, here is good Mrs. Ellis with her daughter Alice, and her little son. Oh, Tom, how you have grown since we saw you last! You are grown wiser and better? I know you have attended well to your lessons, for Mr. Ingram often stroked your curly pate, and said, "O, what a very good boy!" and his poor mother's eyes were filled with tears at hearing the praises of her son; but did she not, at the same time, think that Edward were as dutiful as he was quick? Was not Edward not a good boy, then? Not always, now, dear reader, I must tell the truth, for though he is as kind-hearted and affectionate as the fellow as ever lived, he is not *always* so good, and I shall have to tell you of the grie-

Among the buyers we see our old friends ; in some of them a very great change may be observed. Look at the little Smiths, you can scarcely believe them to be the rude, dirty children of twelve months ago ; indeed, a very material improvement may be seen in our village community, thanks to the school and its founders.

“Now, William,” we hear a merry voice exclaim, “you must undertake the sale of the boys’ clothes, for you are supposed to understand it better than we do ; Caroline and I will sell the cloaks and bonnets ; mamma, I shall leave to your care the under-clothing ; you, and Mrs. Ingram, and Mrs. Ellis, I know, will have enough to do.

“And, good people all,” said the merry young lady, “take notice that the sale is begun, and I am here ready to offer you some very cheap bargains.” See how the honest folks flock round her, dear reader ; I fear she is too attractive, or that the bonnets and cloaks command a greater share of attention than the more homely garments. Ah ! but there is an opposition set up ; for Miss Caroline (half-hidden behind a pile of pretty baskets) is assuring the farmers’ wives of the solidity of the marketing ones, and introducing the lighter and more graceful wares as fit adornments for their neat parlours, on which some of our village dames pride themselves not a little, I assure you. But what is all that laughing about at

Miss Langdale's part of the table? Why, the young Squire, full of fun as usual, and very kind fun it is, has promised to make a purchase from his sister of six bonnets to be given to the six best runners of the girls' party, so there are twenty of them just going to start in the race. And there is our old friend Bounder looking quite excited; he seems to know that there is preparation for a chase. But this won't do, Bounder; if you don't remember old times, the girls do; and, "If you please, Mr. Edwin; if you please, sir," says a great many little voices; "will you keep the great dog back; we are afraid of him, sir?"

"Well, well, girls," says the good-natured young man, "I'll try what I can do; but you don't know what a strong fellow he is; there's no holding him in against his inclination."

"Oh, Mr. Edwin, he will obey you; we know he won't stir if you tell him not."

"Mind and take a lesson then from my good dog, children, and do as your parents wish you always."

"May we take Bounder with *us*, if you please, sir?" said a curly-pated boy, who came up just then. "We are going into the wood to get some nuts."

"With all my heart, Edward, the girls, I dare *say*, will be as glad to get rid of him as you are to have him."

"*Here! Bounder! Bounder!*" shouted a dozen voices; and the noble animal darted off after the party of boys, who scampered away over the soft green turf, and soon cleared the field; while the girls, freed from their fear of the dog, began their race in good earnest. Not a bad race neither, though some of the little party tripped and fell, thereby losing their bonnets of course; while others, finding that with all their efforts they could not reach the gate as soon as their companions, gave up the contest. Of the six who gained the gate, one was little Ann Richards, and another, Hannah Smith; Alice, timid Alice, could not be persuaded to run; and we are glad she did not, for she would not have gained a prize; she is too gentle for such violent exercise, but she is a good girl, and her mother's greatest comfort.

And now there is such a trying of bonnets on to little flushed faces, with streaming locks.

"Get away with you, Edwin, how can you know anything about bonnets? leave me to try them on!"

"No, indeed, my saucy sister, if I *buy* the bonnets of you, I have a right to do what I like with them."

And you should have seen, children, how well the young Squire performed his task, and how readily the half-dozen smiling faces were upturned, that the strings might be tied of their new possessions.

together for a benevolent purpose! What results would follow our imitation of the in going about doing good!

The sale is proceeding rapidly, a few, a things remain on hand; who is to be the purchaser? There are some wistful looks towards the garments from those who I fear have means to buy with; but there are also observant eyes, and this is not a day for me made sad.

Mrs. Langdale takes notice of all that is going on. "Come," says that kind lady, "it will be a pity to let any of these nicely-made things lie by in a closet till another year for want of a purchaser, when there are so many who need them. I think I had better secure them myself, and buy all that are left from this day's sale."

weary with wandering about, sit down, some on the green sward, some on the school forms, and other impromptu seats; very comfortable all the party appear to be, and the good bread and cheese, and cheering cups of ale, impart fresh spirits to the weary ones.

Where are all the juveniles? The girls' party are enjoying themselves mightily, there can be no mistake about that, if you listen to the merry laugh and incessant chatter they keep up, though they have modestly retired far enough off to prevent their being troublesome. But why, I wonder, are the boys absent so long? There are one or two anxious faces I see in the crowd; poor Mrs. Ellis is looking pale and uneasy; she is such a tender mother; and oh, remember her loss little more than a year ago; can we wonder if she has fears? Dear Edward, suppose *he* should have met with any accident! Thus she thinks, though she says nothing to those about her: she does not wish to communicate her fears to the happy party, to cast a dark shadow on their present enjoyment; but she thinks with a beating heart of the river, whose dangerous shelving sides she had so often warned her little son to avoid.

Hark! there's a shouting as for help, and some boys are seen running with breathless haste across the field; a wild cry of distress is heard, what can

be the matter? "Oh, Father of Mercies, preserve my son!" is the poor mother's prayer, as she presses forward with the rest of the party, who are now all on the alert to hear the tidings.

"Edward Ellis! Edward Ellis is in the river! Oh, Mr. Ingram! Mr. Langdale! come, come to help us!" And with these hurried exclamations, the little party turned back again to learn the fate of their poor companion.

Half fainting under her load of sorrow, yet determined to go to her child, poor Mrs. Ellis was supported by the young Squire and Mr. Ingram, who spoke to her in the words of hope and comfort.

And now they are not far from the water side, when a wild shout of half joy, half fear, is raised by the boys, "He has got him! he has got him! Well done, Bounder! good dog, good dog!" while the faithful creature sprang with his seemingly lifeless burden to the bank, and laid the pale inanimate form at his master's feet.

To lift the child up in his arms, yet to hold him in a right position for the water to pour from his mouth, to rush with his burthen to the nearest dwelling, was the young Squire's immediate impulse. He well knew how much would depend on prompt assistance, and he did not therefore wait even for the poor mother to look at her darling boy; he left her under Mr. Ingram's care.

When he reached the cottage, after laying the child on his face, his first care was to have warm blankets and a blazing fire prepared, then stripping off the wet clothes, he chafed the limbs of the little unconscious one with his own warm hands. Soon the rest of the party arrived, and all proper restoratives being applied, by the time his poor mother looked on him Edward began to show some signs of life. The widow fell on her knees beside her child, to offer thanks and praise for this signal deliverance to the Father of Mercies, who had spared her the sorrow of a second bereavement; and, in the solemn lesson taught to her little son on the folly of disobedience, had, she hoped, restored to her a child wiser and better from experience.

Slowly, but gradually, came returning consciousness to the poor boy, and as from time to time the anxious party, who waited outside, were informed of each change for the better, the gloom which had spread itself, like a dense fog, over the pleasant landscape, began to disperse; till, at last, the announcement that Edward was sitting up, and that the boys were at liberty to go and partake of the good things provided (which, indeed, by this time they stood greatly in need of), produced a general cheer, and as general a movement towards the tables.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

Bounder, Bounder was the hero of the praises were circulating on every side, and hands were held out to offer him a taste of good cheer, that I am sure, if he had been very prudent, as well as a courageous man, he must have been seduced into taking a good deal more food than would have been good for him. You see, my little readers, he was by no means a steady fellow, and I am rather inclined to believe he liked the praises bestowed upon him better than all the nice bits offered to him. I would not set Bounder up as a pattern of temperance to my young friends, for he positively refused to do more than what nature required, in spite of all the coaxing and solicitation.

Ellis is sitting by the cottage fire, with her red treasure in her arms; often, often she looks at his still pale cheek, and clasps him close.

their doing so. All are again happy, but their joy is a subdued feeling, they seem to remember how **near** sorrow has been to their rejoicing, and the pleasure they feel is of a very different character to what they before experienced,—so it should be ever with us when we are called on to witness any striking Providence ; it is the voice of God speaking to us, bidding us “remember our Creator in the days of our youth ” and joy !

And where is sister Alice all this time ? There, there she is, kneeling beside her mother, kissing and rubbing poor Teddy’s hands, and often stroking his now recovered curls. Oh, little boy, how much you are loved ! Surely, surely you will be good for the future, and, I trust, live to be a real blessing to that devoted mother, and kind, gentle sister of yours ! •

“Come, dear Mrs. Ellis,” said Miss Langdale, “you *must not*, indeed, you must not cry any more, but drink the tea I have poured out for you. I think the best thing I could do would be to go and bring Bounder to you ; faithful, good Bounder, I shall always love him for this day’s work.”

“Oh, do fetch the noble dog, Miss Langdale, and I will promise you not to cry any more.”

And away went the young lady in search of her canine friend. Oh, Bounder, what an important

dog you were that eventful day ! What a number of courtly epithets were bestowed upon you ; how many caressing hands were laid upon your curly coat, and how many little ladies and gentlemen would have begun to consider themselves really persons of distinction if they had received half the commendations bestowed upon you. Wise Bounder, you turned a deaf ear to compliments though you were mightily pleased at being caressed, and you took care to return all the fondling with interest. Fie on you, sir ! for a lubberly and indiscriminating fellow, when, as poor little Nelly Ingram was patting you with her tiny hand, you turned round and licked her face all over with your huge tongue, while the poor child, mistaking your intentions, screamed herself almost into fits. " Oh, little Nelly, little Nelly, don't be frightened, darling ! " says a kind voice, " Bounder won't hurt you, he is only kissing you."

" Oh, he doin to bite me ; tate de date dod away ! tate him away ! " and Bounder *was* taken away, to one who could better understand his rough and ready caresses. There he is now by Edward Ellis's side, and the still feeble arms of the boy are thrown round the dog's neck in a loving embrace ; and the face of Teddy is licked all over, again and again, without *any* reproof on *the part of any* body.

Now, children, I dare say you feel curious to know how the disaster we have been speaking of happened; and if you please we will retrace our steps awhile, and follow the merry boys across the fields, when they departed on their nutting expedition.

Well was it for them that they chose so trusty a companion as Bounder; they might otherwise have had to deplore the loss of one of their little party. Always take care, children, what company you keep, and be sure, if possible, to have at least *one* wise head among you in your pleasure parties.

But away we go over the pleasant meadows till we reach the river side, that cool, bright, sparkling river; so clear, that the pebbles beneath look as though a crystal veil were thrown over them, which makes them appear much more beautiful than they really are. How lovely everything is! We should like to stand still and gaze around us, but those merry, noisy boys, are thinking about the nuts they mean to gather, and without a care for disturbing the crystal mirror spread before them—splash—splash—splash they go through the shallow water, making the magic stones crunch beneath their feet; and Master Bounder, is he more sentimental than the rest of the company? Not a bit more; there he is, tumbling, and frisking,

the heat of enjoyment, for there are
and I am sure there will be many
jokes cracked in that little party.

For remember, good reader, these villi-
Much less of the *too clever* world than
I don't say 'twas better, I don't say 'twas
For the merry young creatures ; but that
When you hear foolish jokes made on
“ *Irreverent jesting to misery tends ;* ”
And he that can laugh at the good and
His lesson hath learn'd from the Father.

I ask your pardon, children, to
moralise just then, but a sudden re-
me about the many foolish prin-
which are now circulated, and which
to bring into ridicule, persons
should be rather



with hazel and other trees, and very
the heat of enjoyment, for there are ple
and I am sure there will be many mor
jokes cracked in that little party.

For remember, good reader, these village bo
Much less of the *too clever* world than *you* d
I don't say 'twas better, I don't say 'twas w
For the merry young creatures ; but think c
When you hear foolish jokes made on parent
" Irreverent jesting to misery tends ;"

And he that can laugh at the good and the
His lesson hath learn'd from the Father of I

I ask your pardon, children, for
moralise just then, but a sudden thou
me about the many foolish prints
which are now circulated, and which
to bring into ridicule

at that sturdy oak, it has stretched its thick arm half way across the deep, dark stream, and several smaller branches are hanging from it.

Edward Ellis! Edward Ellis! What are *you* doing here? is not this a *forbidden* spot? How often have you been told of the danger lurking here, and yet are you going to venture on that supple bough? Oh, boy! boy! why will you be so foolish, so wicked?

"Ned, Ned, don't go there, Ned!" shout some of his young companions; but Ned is already swinging on the bough, or rather on one of the small branches growing from it; he thinks it fine fun, and in his excitement, a mother's fears and warnings are all forgotten.

Edward swings away on the branch of the old tree, delighted with its elastic motion. "Don't you be such a coward, Will," he calls out to one of his young companions, "this bough is strong enough to hold two or three of us. Oh, it is so pleasant! come and have a ride!"

Some of the more daring of the boys now drew near the tree, intending to accept Edward's challenge, and seeing them approach, the little fellow swung the bough more vigorously than before, when, lo! a crash! then a deep splash in the river, and where was Edward Ellis? The dark waters had closed over his head, and a cry of

this fearful moment ; and while some of
ran off to call for assistance, and others
mute terror watching the spot where poor
fell in, Bounder was watching also, his m
made up, no doubt, how to act, for, as
first plunge the poor boy rose again to th
the noble dog instantly rushed into the
though in his first attempt to save the chi
seemed to plunge him more deeply into t
he finally succeeded in laying hold of
clothes and carrying him safely to the ba

All this, however, occupied some tim
which the boys stood in breathless e:
except that the words—" seize him, Boun
dog, seize him ! now then !" were utt
appeared quite stupified with fear. Oh,
" No, he has missed and poor Edw

beautiful eyes closed as if in death, his curly hair straight, and dripping; what a sight for the poor mother! Is he dead? Is he dead? Oh, poor Mrs. Ellis, oh, poor Alice, and some of the boys began to cry aloud, as they thought of the widow and her daughter; but I have told you before how, just at that time, the young Squire had arrived, and carried Edward off to the cottage where he received those helps which were necessary for his restoration.

Now you have heard the story of this little boy's disobedience, and its sad effects for a time at least, let us mingle once more with the party on the green. We must not expect Mrs. Ellis, nor Alice, nor the repentant Edward to leave the cottage till they do it to return home, so we must try to do without them.

But I think I hear a kind, sagacious little girl say, "Where are good Mr. and Mrs. Ingram all this while? did *they* not go to comfort the widow and to see the poor half-drowned boy." Indeed they did, my fair child; *they* were not the persons to shrink from friends in distress; but when they saw all was safe they thought it better to do as Miss Langdale suggested—return to the business and recreation of the day, for well they knew that their absence would create a sad blank among their poor people.

"My worthy friends," said the worthy pastor

we, who have been ...
for their sakes ;” and with a hearty good
motive was responded to by all present
and bounteous as had been the provision
few fragments of the feast remained
boys rose from the table ; before they did
ever, the young Squire’s voice was heard
them.

“Now children and good people all,” said
I see you are walking off and neglecting
favourite of mine, I beg to call your attention
toast I have to propose, and each of you
take an extra cup of milk to do honour
can any one here tell whose health I
give ?”

“I know, I know, I know,” sounded
lads. “Well, who is it ?” “Bounded
... noise ! why th

Bounder;' and may all little boys and girls be as faithful and as dutiful as he is."

Then there was such cheering as, perhaps, you never heard, but they heard it at the cottage, and Miss Langdale told Mrs. Ellis what it was about, and Mrs. Ellis, and Edward, and Alice, laughed and cried, and cried and laughed, till they scarcely knew which they were doing. As for *Bounder*, he was here, there, and everywhere, and before the happy party separated, he had made himself so familiar and agreeable, even to the frightened girls, that they ransacked the village gardens for flowers to make a garland for his neck, an honour, which I am sorry to say, he did not at all appreciate, for long before he reached his kennel that night the pretty flowers were all scattered to the winds.

Once more the voice of the shepherd is heard warning his little flock that it is time to return to the fold; calling them altogether, the good pastor reminds them, as he had done on a former occasion of the past year's mercies, of that day's deliverance, of their privileges, of their duties. Then, after a short but fervent service of praise and prayer, he gave them his parting blessing, and the company separated. Many of them, I doubt not, deeply affected, and some with earnest hearts determined to exert themselves more than ever for

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

in improvement, as well as for the good
ound them.

Mrs. Ellis 'go on well with the scho
nd reader ; she taught in it for two

And William Wheeler? He became
school-master, rapidly improving hims

e taught others ; for he was one of th
who are never idle. When Alice g

was married to William, and good M
ed in her own little cottage with

n Edward, who had followed his fath
nd was a good carpenter ; yes, and a g

am and Alice kept the school, and M
d nothing to do but to pass her d

r children in peace and happiness ; o
ld never be idle ; she had every day sc

them to be for her neighbours

history of people, only an account of the village school-feast ; so, in what is wanting, I must leave you to fill up the blank. You must think, if you please, what *should* have become of Miss Langdale, and Miss Caroline, and Mr. Edwin, and the Squire and his lady. Of the widow Richards and her three daughters ; of Mrs. Banks and her children ; and of the poor “ ne’er-do-weels ”—the Smiths ; no doubt these latter became good in time ; for we do not want to think that there remain any bad people in our village of B——.

THE END.



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